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NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM

ITS HISTORY AND RESULTS

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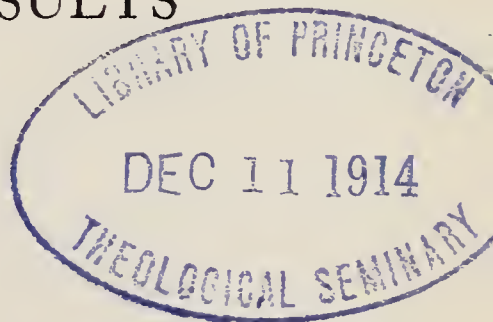


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NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM

ITS HISTORY AND RESULTS



BY

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PREFACE.

THE Author desires to acknowledge the kind assistance he has received from his friends, the Rev. William Cruickshank, B.D., and the Rev. R. S. Kemp, B.D., in the revision of proof-sheets. He has also to thank Mr. Cruickshank for drawing up the list of kindred literature, published within the last quarter of a century, which will be found in the Appendix. Many of the books contained in the list have been consulted by the Author in the preparation of these Lectures.

November, 1913.



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

BIBLICAL Criticism has often been regarded with suspicion by devout members of the Church ; it has been denounced and deplored, as if it were injurious to the interests of the Christian religion. Even in this scientific age, when everything else is subjected to the strictest examination, there are some who would make an exception of the Scriptures, and who look upon Criticism as an enemy of the faith. But no such immunity can be granted, and none should be sought by the defenders of the faith. If it be guided by sound principles, Criticism cannot injure the interests of truth ; only error and falsehood have anything to fear from its conclusions. It cannot be denied, indeed, that its history has been marked by many indiscretions and many blunders ; its representatives have often seemed to forget

the momentous nature of the interests involved in their inquiries, and to be more influenced by the hope of winning distinction through the originality of their speculations than by a desire to advance the interests of the religion they profess. This is especially true of the nineteenth century,¹ when ecclesiastical prejudice has been more than counterbalanced by academic license, and veneration for received opinions has given place to restless love of novelty, the boldest theorist being too often regarded as the most enlightened critic, whose lead should be followed by all who desire to keep abreast of the age. It must also be admitted that great part of the labour spent on the discussion of critical questions in connexion with the study of the Bible has fre-

¹ In a wider sense it has been said by Prof. Saintsbury : "It has been the mission of the nineteenth century to prove that everybody's work was written by somebody else, and it will not be the most useless task of the twentieth to betake itself to more profitable inquiries." Speaking with reference to New Testament Criticism, Sir Wm. M. Ramsay says : "We are no longer in the nineteenth century with its negations, but in the twentieth century with its growing power of insight and the power of belief that springs therefrom."

quently been of little use except to bring out the scholarship and argumentative powers of those who are engaged in theological pursuits, the result of such inquiries being either to bewilder the reader with conflicting theories, or to concentrate attention unduly on minute points of controversy which are of no real importance. But, when all this is said, it still remains true that there is a legitimate field for Criticism in connexion with the Bible—in other words, for the application of scientific methods in the solution of its literary problems; and in the long-run such studies cannot fail to advance the cause of righteousness and truth.

While tradition is never to be disregarded, and is often to be treated with the greatest respect, it can never be held to be an infallible guide in the settlement of critical questions. Such absolute authority cannot be conceded to it even when the testimony of the Church is unbroken, much less when it is divided. No Protestant, no one acquainted with the history of the Canon or with the wider history of the Church, can accept the principle laid down by Bishop Wordsworth when he says: “If any book which the Church universal

propounds to us as scripture, be not scripture ; if any book which she reads as the word of God, be not the word of God, but the work of an impostor,—then, with reverence be it said, Christ's promise to His Church has failed, and the Holy Spirit has not been given to guide her into all truth.”¹

Although it was not till last century that New Testament Criticism came prominently into view, its history can be traced back to the first century of the Christian era. There is a sense in which it may be said to be older than the New Testament itself. Before the sacred volume came into existence, the various writings of which it is composed had for many years to submit to the judgment of the Christian communities in which they circulated, before they could be admitted to a position of respect and honour in the Church at large. If they bore the name of an apostle, their authorship had to be established ; if they made no such claim, they had to depend for a favourable reception on the intrinsic value and importance of their contents. All of them

¹ Wordsworth's "Greek Testament ; The General Epistles," p. 77.

had thus to go through a period of probation, in common with many other writings which competed with them for the confidence of the Church; and it was only because they commended themselves to general approval that the writings which we find in the New Testament gradually obtained a position of authority similar to that which the Old Testament held among the Jews.

In this respect the history of the New Testament may be contrasted with that of the Koran. The sacred book of Islam was invested from the first with the authority of Mahomet himself, who claimed to have received its contents by Divine revelation from heaven, and imposed it on the faith and obedience of his followers. On the other hand, with the exception of the recorded words of Christ Himself, than which nothing could have been more authoritative for the early Christians, the adoption of the New Testament writings as a rule of faith was the result of a gradual process, being due to the estimate put upon the several writings by Christians themselves as the result of experience, rather than to any high claims made for them by their authors, who never

dreamt of their productions being put on a level with the Old Testament.

It was only by slow degrees that the influence of these writings spread from the communities in which they originated, or to which they were addressed, to the congregations of the Church at large. They were found suitable for reading in the public services of the Church; they were quoted and appealed to by the leaders of the Church when contending for the "tradition of the apostles" against heresy and schism; they were translated into various languages to meet the wants of Christians in different parts of the world; and in consequence of the use thus made of them they tended more and more to acquire a sacred character, and came to be regarded as a supplement, and ultimately as a counterpart, to the Old Testament. Some of them had to wait for a considerable time before they gained recognition in parts of the world where they were little known, or where some heresy prevailed which could not be reconciled with their teaching; but by the end of the second century we find the idea of a New Testament fully recognized by representative men in all parts

of the Church, with a consensus of opinion in favour of the great majority of the writings which have a place in our Canon. In the Muratorian Fragment, as it is called, a rough Latin translation of a Greek original which is supposed to have been written by a Roman ecclesiastic before the end of the second century, we find an interesting statement regarding the books which were to be received as authoritative, showing what a serious question this was felt to be, and what care was taken to exclude from the number even useful and edifying books which could not claim any kind of apostolic authority. At the same time, so much freedom of opinion was permitted on the subject, and there was so little of an attempt on the part of the Catholic Church to fix a definite Canon as an article of the faith, that in some quarters we find permission given for the public reading of certain books which were not acknowledged as authoritative ; and some of these books we find included in several of the oldest manuscripts.

One of the most important witnesses on the subject of the Canon is Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, who lived in the early part of

the fourth century. No man was better acquainted with the history of the Church, or in a better position to know the views of his contemporaries; and he tells us that, while opinion was divided regarding five of the shorter Epistles, and, in some quarters, about the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Apocalypse of John, the rest of the books which have a place in the New Testament, and no others, were unanimously accepted. As time went on, even those writings which had been looked upon as doubtful were regarded with increasing favour, so that by the end of the fourth century a collection of sacred books, identical with our New Testament, was generally accepted by the Church at large, both in east and west.¹

For the next thousand years the history of Biblical Criticism is almost entirely a history of interpretation dominated by tradition. Being regarded as all alike Divine, the Scriptures were too often treated as if they had little or nothing in common with other literature,

¹ Such a list is given in the Easter letter of Athanasius (367 A.D.) and in the 39th Canon of the Council of Carthage (397).

and every endeavour was made to find even in their most casual and homely references a meaning that would be worthy of their Divine Author. It was in this way that the allegorical method of interpretation, which has played so great a part in the history of the Bible, came into vogue. As might have been expected, the Old Testament was the first to suffer. The fanciful exegesis of the Jewish Elders reappeared in the writings of the Church Fathers, who exercised their ingenuity in the attempt to justify the statements, and spiritualize the teaching, of the Old Testament. The idea of a progressive revelation was still a great way off. There were some bold thinkers in the Church who thought to get rid of their difficulties in connexion with the Old Testament by regarding it as the work of an inferior Being, whom they called the Demiurge, as the Creator of the physical universe; but most of the early theologians, abjuring this and other Gnostic heresies, were content to have recourse to the allegorical mode of interpretation, availing themselves of it more or less in their treatment both of the Old and the New Testament. If the Gnostic views

had prevailed in the Church, they would soon have destroyed the historic foundations of the Christian faith ; and for that reason they were discountenanced and condemned by the ecclesiastical authorities, who insisted on the reality of the evangelical facts, received by tradition from the apostles, which were to be found in the Gospels. Unfortunately, in the endeavour to counteract such heretical teaching, they gave their *imprimatur* to a traditional exegesis, that too often coloured the facts of the Gospel with ideas of a mystical character which the sacred writers had never intended to convey. For illustrations of this tendency we need only refer to the works of Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, the last named representing the tendency in its most highly developed form.

During the Middle Ages, when the Bible fell into the hands of sacerdotal and monastic Orders, the interpretation of Scripture became more and more artificial, more and more arbitrary. To the infallibility which had been long claimed for Scripture itself there was added a claim to infallibility on the part of its authorized interpreters. Under the Papal

Supremacy this claim was enforced, the result being that the laity were practically debarred from the study of the Bible. Although the Church of Rome never denied the authority of Scripture, she practically nullified it by her tradition, confining its use to a privileged class, and preventing her members generally from coming into direct contact with the living and abiding truth which it enshrined.

But in the good providence of God the time came when the barrier thus erected was to be thrown down. For hundreds of years before the Reformation, forces were at work, both in Church and State, which tended to dispel the darkness in which the Scriptures had been shrouded, and to bring them out of their sacred isolation into touch with the new knowledge which men were everywhere acquiring. The change was due partly to the revival of classical learning, partly to the powerful stimulus given to the intelligence of the laity by the discovery of the New World. A spirit of inquiry was awakened, and when the Reformers set the Scriptures free from the bondage of ecclesiastical tradition and put them into the hands of the people, they met one of the great needs of the

age. The advantage was specially great in the case of the New Testament, as it was in no sense the product of a priestly or a hermit class, but represented the thought and experience of men who lived among their fellows, and had for its chief subject the ministry of one who was made like unto his brethren, associating with them in their homes, their streets, and their market-places, as well as in their synagogues. It was an immense gain for the right understanding of such a book when it was set free for the study of all ranks and classes; but in course of time the exigencies of the Protestant position tended to impair this freedom. Disowning the authority of the Church, the Reformers were tempted to lay undue emphasis on the authority of Scripture and to claim for it something very like infallibility. In theory both Luther and Calvin held that the rightful claimant to authority in opposition to the Church was not the Scriptures but the Holy Spirit speaking through the Scriptures—the true antithesis to Scripture being the Tradition by which it had been superseded in the Church of Rome, as the Old Testament had been superseded by the teach-

ing of the scribes and Pharisees. But while the Reformers repudiated the Romish superstition they fell into the ancient error of reading into the Bible a great deal that was not warranted either from a grammatical or historical point of view. Even Calvin, who professed to adhere to the literal sense, and did so to a much greater extent than any of his contemporaries, was so much under the influence of dogmatic prepossessions as frequently to pervert the true meaning of Scripture.

Still, with all its shortcomings, the Reformation was essentially a critical movement; it was based on the principle laid down by Paul, "He that is spiritual judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man" (I Cor. 2¹⁵). On this principle Luther argued for the absolute necessity of private judgment in the recognition of Divine truth.¹ He held that

¹ "The Romanists say, Yes, but how can we know what is God's word and what is true or false? We must learn it from the Pope and the Councils. Very well, let them decree and say what they will, still say I, Thou canst not rest thy confidence thereon, nor satisfy thy conscience: thou must thyself decide; thy neck is at stake, thy life is at stake. Therefore must God say to thee in thine heart: This is God's word, else it is still undecided." (Disputation with Eck.)

Scripture required no outward testimony, the Gospel message being authenticated by the Holy Spirit in the heart ; and everything else in Scripture was to be judged by its relation to the sovereign truth. In the application of this test he was led to set special value on certain books of the New Testament which contained, as he said, the very marrow of the Gospel, and to call in question the claims of other books which seemed to be less evangelical. "That which does not teach Christ is not apostolic, though Peter or Paul should have said it ; on the other hand, that which preaches Christ would be apostolic, even if it came from Judas, Annas, Herod, and Pilate." Again : "The Church cannot give more authority or force to a book than it has in itself. A Council cannot make that to be scripture which in its own nature is not scripture." Luther's test was subjective and spiritual, but without some regard to the testimony borne to them by the early Church, it is difficult to see how he could have justified the exclusive attention which he paid to the books in the Canon.

The same principle was laid down by Calvin, though in a somewhat different form.¹

¹ "There are several in this pernicious error that the Scripture has no more weight than is given to it by the consent of the Church, as if the eternal and inviolable truth of God were founded on the pleasure of men. For they, showing contempt of the Holy Spirit, make this demand : Who will certify to us that the Scriptures come from God ; who will assure us that they have been preserved in their entirety down to the present day ; and who will persuade us that one book is to be received and another rejected, if the Church is not our guarantee on all these matters ? Hence they conclude that it lies in the power of the Church to determine what reverence we owe to the Scriptures, and what book ought to be included among them. Thus these blasphemers, wishing to exalt an unlimited tyranny under cover of the Church, care not in what absurdity they involve themselves and others, provided they can gain this point among the simple that all things are in the power of the Church. Now, if this be so, what would become of the poor consciences that seek certain assurance of eternal life, when they saw all the promises concerning it based solely on the judgment of men ? . . . If we wish to make provision for consciences, so as to keep them from being agitated in perpetual doubt, we must take the authority of the Scriptures as higher than human reasoning or proofs or conjectures. In other words, we must found it on the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. . . . For granting that, in their own majesty, there is sufficient ground for reverencing them, yet they begin truly to touch us when they are

From the authority of the Church Calvin appealed to the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the reader, as an all-sufficient evidence of God's Word; but in doing so he made Scripture the sole outward standard, leaving no room, in theory, for the authority of tradition, and taking for granted that the testimony of the Holy Spirit would always prove the Bible to be the Word of God. While Luther considered that there was room for difference of opinion with regard to the inspiration of certain books and portions of books,¹ Calvin regarded the whole Bible as a

sealed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Being then illuminated by His power, we believe, not on our own judgment nor on the judgment of others, that the Scriptures are from God; but above all human judgment, we decide beyond dispute that they were given us from the very mouth of God, just as if with the eye we were contemplating in them the essence of God." (*Institutes*, Bk. I, Chap. vii, from Reuss on *The Canon*, E. T., p. 294 f.)

¹ Using a freedom of criticism which had been already claimed by Erasmus on literary grounds. Luther put Hebrews, James, Jude, and the Apocalypse on a lower level than the rest of the New Testament. Karlstadt went farther, arranging the New Testament books in three grades of merit, and attributing Second and Third John not to the Apostle but to "John the Presbyter"—in which he was followed by Hugo Grotius, the Arminian, in the next century.

homogeneous revelation, and did not hesitate to appeal to any statement contained in it as resting on Divine authority, although he held independent opinions regarding the authorship of certain books.¹ Strictly speaking, he was only entitled to claim authority and infallibility for those parts of Scripture which could be verified by the Christian conscience. But the time was not yet ripe for such a discrimination between the essential and the non-essential; and the practical needs of Protestantism could only be met by maintaining and enhancing the authority of the traditional Bible which had been acknowledged by the Western Church for a thousand years.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the critical efforts of the Reformers were largely directed against the claims of the Jewish Apocrypha, their object being to justify its exclusion from the Canon in such a way as not to prejudice the claims of the books which were retained in the Protestant Canon.

At the same time, any critical treatment of the canonical books was to a large extent precluded by the Confessions which now became

¹ Hebrews, James, II Peter, and Jude.

general, embodying the settled opinions of the Reformers, and forming the Protestant equivalent to the Decrees of the Council of Trent.¹

When the Confessions gave a list, as many of them did, of the books accepted as canonical, the natural effect of this was to render almost nominal the idea, so dear to the heart of the Reformers, of applying a personal test to the Scriptures. Their successors, instead of keeping the Bible subject to the judgment of the Spirit, tended to make an idol of it, claiming for it absolute infallibility, or inerrancy, as it is now called. This led to a theory of Verbal Inspiration which culminated in the declaration of the Helvetic Convention of 1675, that "the Hebrew text, both as regards consonants and

¹ These Decrees determined the Roman Catholic Canon by giving full and final sanction to the collection of sacred books which had been translated into Latin by Jerome and was known as the Vulgate. The Decrees at the same time stated that the Church "receives and venerates with an equal piety and reverence the Traditions pertaining both to faith and to morals, as proceeding from the mouth of Christ, or dictated by the Holy Spirit, and preserved in the Church Catholic by continuous succession." Appended to this decree is a catalogue of the books "which the Synod thus receives."

as regards vowels—or, if not the vowel points themselves, at least the significance of the points—is divinely inspired.” Perfection was claimed for the form as well as for the substance, for the letter as well as for the spirit, and it was accounted by some a heinous sin, “blasphemy against the Holy Ghost” (to use the language of the Wittenberg theologians), to criticize the diction or style of the Greek Testament. Even such a sensible and sober-minded man as John Owen, the Puritan, maintained that “the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were immediately and entirely given out by God himself, His mind being in them represented unto us without the least intervening of such mediums and ways as were capable of giving change or alteration to the least iota or syllable.” In accordance with this view the sacred writers were often spoken of as God’s pen-men or amanuenses, as if He were to be held responsible for every word they committed to writing. It is only of recent years that this view has been questioned by the Churches. Yet it is difficult to understand how it could ever have been held by any one who had a thorough knowledge of the Scrip-

tures. That it was not the view of the Old Testament taken by our Lord and His apostles may be inferred from the manner in which they quote its words. Out of two hundred and seventy-five Old Testament quotations in the New Testament there are only sixty-three which agree exactly with the Hebrew; in thirty-seven cases the quotation is taken from the Septuagint or Greek translation,¹ where it does not correctly render the Hebrew; there are seventy-six cases in which the correct rendering in the Septuagint has been modified; and there are ninety-nine passages in which the New Testament differs both from the original Hebrew and the Septuagint.

If there are any utterances that we might expect to be preserved *verbatim et literatim*, it would surely be our Lord's discourses. But we find that in reporting them the evangelists are far from adhering to the letter. Their several reports frequently differ from one another, reproducing the sayings in the spirit, and not in the letter. This is the case even as regards the Lord's Prayer, the

¹ Begun in the third century B.C., but probably not completed till about the beginning of the Christian era.

Beatitudes, and the words of institution of the Lord's Supper. A similar variety is found in the several records of events in the history of our Lord and of His Church. The accounts given in the Gospels differ so much in matters of detail that it is almost impossible to construct out of them a perfect harmony of the life of Christ. In the Acts of the Apostles there are sometimes more than one account of the same incident, for example, the conversion of Saul, and the vision of Peter at Joppa; but in such cases the accounts differ from one another in a way that would have been impossible if the speakers and writers had been under the influence of verbal inspiration.

Even if it had been otherwise, however, even if the words of the speakers and writers had been secured against the slightest inaccuracy, it is difficult to see of what use this would have been to Christendom, unless the Greek or Hebrew text had been preserved intact through all generations, and the translations into other languages had also been kept free from error. Hence we can understand John Owen's contention when he said that "the notion that the Bible had not been

properly protected, bordered in his mind on Atheism," as well as the claim which the Westminster Confession makes for the original Scriptures in Hebrew and Greek, that "being immediately inspired by God, and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, they are therefore authentic."¹

The more closely we examine the Scriptures, the more are we led to the conclusion that the sacred writers were left to the free exercise of their natural faculties, and that any influence brought to bear upon them from above was merely for the purpose of securing their efficiency as witnesses to Divine truth. It is to this we owe the striking variety in their writings which is one of the great charms of the Bible, but is quite incompatible with the literal accuracy and verbal infallibility which many people desiderate in a Divine revelation. Most of us would like an infallible Bible if we

¹This is one of the points of doctrine on which the more liberal formula of subscription to the Confession of Faith recently adopted by the Church of Scotland is fitted to afford relief to tender consciences: "I hereby subscribe the Confession of Faith, declaring that I accept it as the Confession of this Church, and that I believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith contained therein."

could get it. It would save us so much trouble and perplexity, affording unerring guidance on every question. In this as in so many other respects the Roman Catholic Church has taken care to adapt her teaching to the cravings of human nature. In a papal encyclical issued by Pope Leo XIII we find it stated that “those who maintain that an error is possible in any genuine passage of the sacred writings pervert the Catholic notions of inspiration and make God the author of such error.”

But the truth is, as Bishop Butler said long ago in his “Analogy”: “We are in no sort judges, by what methods, and in what proportion, it were to be expected, that this supernatural light and instruction would be afforded us.” The only question concerning the authority of Scripture is “whether it be what it claims to be; not whether it be a book of such sort, and so promulged, as weak men are apt to fancy, a book containing a divine revelation should. And therefore, neither obscurity, nor seeming inaccuracy of style, nor various readings, nor early disputes about the authors of particular parts; nor any other things of the like kind, though they had been much more considerable in degree than they

are, could overthrow the authority of the Scripture; unless the prophets, apostles, or our Lord, had promised, that the book, containing the divine revelation, should be secure from those things." If this reasoning be sound, it is evident that instead of bringing to the Scriptures a preconceived theory of inspiration we ought to study them humbly and reverently, with the view of ascertaining their real nature and characteristics. In other words, we ought to form our theory of inspiration by the method of induction. The result of an impartial examination of the Bible is to show that there is no such thing as Verbal Inspiration in the sense of every word being equally authoritative and equally Divine. In some passages there is no sign of any supernatural influence having been exerted on the writer, his natural faculties being sufficient for the task assigned to him,—as, for example, in the compilation of historic facts such as were collected by Luke; while in other cases, where a mysterious influence can be traced, it appears to have varied greatly in the case of different writers, and even in different compositions of the same writer, rising to the greatest height

in those prophetic utterances in which the writer or speaker is lifted above himself and so overborne by the Divine Spirit as to bear witness to Divine truth even against his own inclination, under the influence of a will that is stronger than his own, the will of the Eternal.

When we speak of the inspiration of the Bible, therefore, it is well to remember that we are not using an exact scientific expression, but are merely describing the general character of the Scriptures as being in some sense of Divine origin. Great mischief may be done by claiming for the Bible more than it claims for itself. The effect of making claims that cannot be substantiated is to alienate thoughtful and honest men, who are repelled by false pretensions, especially when made in the supposed interests of religion. Many a man's faith has been weakened when he has found the Bible not to be what his teachers represented it to be. On this subject the "judicious Hooker" justifies the epithet so commonly applied to him when he says: "Whatsoever is spoken of God, or things appertaining to God, otherwise than truth is, though it seem an honour, it is an injury. And as incredible

praises given unto men do often abate and impair the credit of their deserved commendation, so we must likewise take great heed, lest, in attributing to Scripture more than it can have, the incredibility of that do cause even those things which it hath most abundantly to be less reverently esteemed." Much to the same effect is the caution given by Richard Baxter in his "Catechising of Families": "The Scripture is like a man's body, where some parts are but for the preservation of the rest, and may be maimed without death: the sense is the soul of the Scripture; and the letters but the body, or vehicle. The doctrine of the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Decalogue, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, is the vital part, and Christianity itself."

It is remarkable how carefully those who framed the Confessions and Articles of the Reformed Churches have refrained from laying down any definite theory of inspiration. In the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England the term is not applied to Scripture at all; while the Westminster Confession, after enumerating all the books of the Old and the New Testament "under the name of Holy

Scripture, or the Word of God written," simply adds: "all which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life." It is also remarkable that the word "inspiration" which has figured so largely in theological controversy, occurs only twice in the whole Bible, once in the Old Testament (Job 32⁸, A.V.), and once in the New Testament (II Tim. 3¹⁶, A.V.); and in neither case is there any indication of the nature or the limits of the Divine influence exerted on the sacred writers. A great deal of labour has been spent both by Jewish and Christian writers in the attempt to define in a scientific manner the various degrees of inspiration which may be traced in different parts of the Bible. But it is much better at once to recognize the fact that the operations of the Holy Spirit are beyond our comprehension, whether they relate to the intellect or to the heart, whether they tend to illuminate the understanding or to sanctify the soul. In either case the co-operation of the Divine with the human is as inscrutable as the union of divinity and humanity in the person of Jesus Christ. It is quite beyond our power to analyse the forces which have been at work,

though we can discern and appreciate their result.¹

The word "inspiration" is now so commonly used in other connexions that it is too late to contend for its exclusive application to Scripture. Even the "Word of God" is an expression which theoretically we have no right to confine to Scripture. It is one thing to say that Scripture contains the Word of God and another thing to say that it is the Word of God, although the distinction has not always been recognized in the Reformed Churches. In the fullest sense Jesus Christ alone is the "Word of God." As John says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was

¹ Dr. Sanday offers a definition of biblical inspiration in his article "Bible" in the "Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics": "If we were to try to sum up in a single word the common property which runs through the whole Bible and which, broadly speaking, may be said to distinguish it from other literature of the kind, we might say that it consists in the peculiar energy and intensity of the *God-consciousness* apparent in the writers." The same tendency that during the last half century has led commentators to dwell more than formerly on the human side of our Lord's life and ministry, has also shown itself in the greater attention now paid by critics to the personal idiosyncrasies and historical environment of those who committed the Divine truths to writing.

with God, and the Word was God. . . . There was the true light, which lighteth every man, coming into the world. . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.” We can therefore understand what Ruskin meant when he said that it is a grave heresy to call any book, or collection of books, the Word of God. “By that Word, or Voice, or Breath, or Spirit, the heavens and earth and all the host of them, were made; and in it they exist. It is your life; and speaks to you always, so long as you live nobly; dies out of you as you refuse to obey it; leaves you to hear, and be slain by, the word of an evil spirit, instead of it. It may come to you in books, come to you in clouds, come to you in the voices of men, come to you in the stillness of deserts. You must be strong in evil, if you have quenched it wholly; very desolate in this Christian land, if you have never heard it at all.” (“Fors Clavigera,” 36³.)

All that we are entitled to claim, or have any need to claim, for the Bible is that it contains the Word of God to a degree unequalled in any other book or in any other literature. In doing so, we may admit, with Luther, regarding certain portions of Scripture, that

the gold and silver and precious stones are mingled with wood and hay and stubble. Or we may adopt the language of a learned divine who took part in the composition of the Shorter Catechism and was one of the clerks of the Westminster Assembly : “ The Scriptures themselves are rather a lanthorn than a light ; they shine indeed, but it is *alieno lumine* ; it is not their own but a borrowed light. . . . It is a light as it represents God unto us, who is the original light. It transmits some rays, some beams of the Divine nature ; but they are refracted, or else we should not be able to behold them. They lose much of their original lustre by passing through this medium, and appear not so glorious to us as they are in themselves. They represent God’s simplicity obliquated and refracted by reason of many inadequate conceptions ; God condescending to the weakness of our capacity to speak to us in our own dialect.” (From a sermon by John Wallis.)

So many tributes have been paid, from many different quarters, to the intrinsic value of the Scriptures, that the question of inspiration is not one about which we need be greatly concerned at the present day. There are more

vital and pressing questions of a critical nature, the chief of these being whether we may rely on the historic truth of the Gospel narrative and the Book of Acts, and whether the Epistles were really written by the men whose names they bear.

The Church demands, and has a right to demand, that these questions be fairly considered, and that a decision be given in every case according to the evidence adduced. If a document be proved to be otherwise trustworthy, the mere fact that it bears witness to the supernatural, whether in a physical or a spiritual sense, cannot be allowed to invalidate the evidence in its favour. The Church could not consent to this without turning its back on its own parentage, since all history shows that it was founded on belief in the supernatural. While ready to give due weight to all that scholars and philosophers have to say, the Christian community cannot give up the right which belongs to it as a spiritual jury to come to a verdict on all that pertains to the essentials of the faith.

It seems now to be practically certain that the literary criticism of the New Testament

will never of itself destroy the foundations of the faith. No investigation of documentary sources is ever likely to discredit the character of the witnesses whose testimony is embodied in our sacred books. But it is always open to those who are sceptically inclined to explain away such testimony by one means or another. Behind all questions of criticism there lies a region of mystery in which philosophical pre-suppositions and personal predilections can hardly fail to make their influence felt. In this region new problems have recently presented themselves, arising out of the discovery of a new world of Jewish thought in the form of an apocalyptic literature of the last century B.C. and the first century A.D., as well as from the fuller recognition of various Gentile influences which are supposed to have contributed to the religion of the primitive Church as represented in the New Testament. It is coming to be seen that the teaching of our Lord and His apostles was not so exclusively related to the Old Testament as was at one time believed to be the case; and we cannot deny the possibility of their having been influenced in some degree by ideas derived from

other sources, which were current in the communities whose intellectual life they shared.¹ To trace such tributary sources of thought and expression outside of the Old Testament comes fairly within the scope of Historical Theology : but the ultimate question for critics and for theologians, as for all other human beings who hear the Gospel, is whether that Gospel is a unique and supernatural manifestation of Divine love, to which there is nothing similar and nothing parallel ; or whether it is only one—the highest and best, it may be—of the numberless forms of religion which have been evolved in the course of human history. This is a question which no examination or analysis of the New Testament will ever be sufficient to settle. We have a striking illustration of this in the fact that recently a book was published by a learned critic, entitled “ Myth, Magic, and Morals,” which did away with the

¹ According to Dr. Clemen in his “ Primitive Christianity and its Non-Jewish Sources ” (1912), the influence of such sources on the New Testament writers was very slight, affecting the form and expression of their teaching, rather than its substance. Prof. Kennedy, in his “ St. Paul and the Mystery-Religions ” (1913), comes to a similar conclusion.

historical character of the Gospels and left as little of the personality of Jesus Christ as the most reckless of random magazine articles, making him out to be an ideal creation of the Apostle Paul. Yet the critical opinions of this writer with regard to the date and authorship of the New Testament books are as conservative as those of many who firmly believe both in the humanity and the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. This shows that no results of criticism, however favourable to the traditional view, can ever compel men to accept the Christian faith; in the last resort their attitude towards it will be determined, not by the intellect, but by the conscience and the heart, operating on the will. In this sense every man must judge of the Gospel for himself, and is bound to study the Scriptures for himself.

At the Reformation, as we have said, the people regained possession of the Bible. But it was not long before they allowed it to fall into the hands of specialists as before,—not monks or priests, but academic theorists who treated it as a theological text-book and left too much out of account its human and homely character. In recent times, however, there

has been a strong reaction, and the discussion of Biblical problems is now engaging the attention of all classes of the people, especially in Protestant lands. Handbooks dealing with questions affecting the genuineness, authenticity, and exegesis of the Scriptures, have now a wide circulation in forms more suitable for popular use than at any previous time. In some quarters, especially in Germany, such literature is too often dominated by naturalistic theories regarding the origin of Christianity and the person of the Saviour, with a tendency to exalt the life of the nation above that of the Church, and to merge theology in a philosophy which can find no room for the supernatural.

In these circumstances we can scarcely wonder at the recent papal encyclical denouncing Modernism, especially in view of the fact that the more prominent Roman Catholic critics, such as Tyrrell and Loisy, like Renan in the previous generation, have taken an extreme position on some of the most vital questions involved. The consequence is that the Church of Rome, which was at one time less disposed to assert the infal-

libility of Scripture than Protestants, is now claiming for it inspiration in the hardest and most mechanical sense. Fearing that criticism may undermine its whole dogmatic system, it has set itself once more in opposition to the principle of private judgment and to the rights of the laity. In this, as in so many other respects, it has departed widely from the spirit of the primitive Church, in which there is little or no trace of official or ecclesiastical domination in matters affecting the reception and interpretation of the New Testament writings.

In this connexion it is interesting to find that the result of recent research among the *papyri* and other ancient memorials has been to show that with very few exceptions the books of the New Testament are written in colloquial Greek, and were intended for the use of the common people. This still further justifies the Protestant position, and it is fitted to exert a salutary influence on professional critics, checking any tendency to heartless pedantry, and bringing home the fact that humanity and piety have even a more important part to play than learning and philosophy

in the just appreciation and the right use of the New Testament.

As Professor Deissmann says: "The New Testament is the people's book. When Luther, therefore, took the New Testament from the learned and gave it to the people, we can only regard him as restoring what was the people's own. And when at some tiny cottage window, behind the fuchsias and geraniums, we see an old dame bending over the open Testament, there the old Book has found a place to which by right of its nature it belongs. Or when a Red Cross sister finds a New Testament in the knapsack of a wounded Japanese, here too, the surroundings are appropriate. . . . Time has transformed the Book of the people into the Book of Humanity."

But it is the Book of God as well as the Book of Humanity, and for that reason it will always maintain its supremacy as the Book of Books. Thomas Carlyle said of it: "There never was any book like the Bible and there never will be another like it." That is a verdict that will stand, not merely because of the unparalleled influence which the Bible has

exerted and is still exerting as a moral and intellectual force, but because it is the abiding record and the true interpretation of a manifestation of God in human history, culminating in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, that can never be repeated while the world lasts.

CHAPTER II

TEXTUAL CRITICISM

THERE are two departments of New Testament Criticism, which are usually distinguished as Higher and Lower, or as Historical and Textual Criticism. While the former has to do with questions affecting the authorship, sources, and dates of composition of the sacred writings, the aim of the latter is to determine the *ipsissima verba* of the original documents and remove any corruptions which may have crept into the text. From a general point of view the Higher Criticism is the more important, as it affects to a much greater extent the credentials of the Christian faith. But it would be a serious omission in such a course of lectures as the present to ignore the part which has been played by Textual Criticism since the revival of Greek learning. It is a field of inquiry in which many difficult problems present

themselves ; and to the solution of these problems a vast amount of erudition, ability, and industry has been devoted, not least by English scholars.

Even if the results of Textual Criticism merely affected the readings in individual passages of Scripture, the labour of investigation would be well spent. But indirectly these results have sometimes an important bearing on questions of date and authorship, by showing that the text had already become deteriorated and must therefore have been in existence for a considerable time. The importance of Textual Criticism is enhanced at the present day by the tendency of a certain school of critics to undermine the historical character of the Gospels and other books of the New Testament by their ingenious theories of interpolation.

The need for inquiry is primarily due to the fact that the New Testament autographs have all disappeared, and, so far as is known, have all perished. This is only what might have been expected, considering the fragile nature of the material on which they were generally written. That material was *papyrus*, translated by the

word "paper" in II John ver. 12, the only passage in the New Testament in which the word occurs.¹

It was scarcely more durable than our writing-paper, and in ordinary circumstances could only have been preserved for many centuries in a dry country like Egypt.² During the last thirty years many fragments of it have come to light in that country, disinterred from the rubbish heaps of buried towns and villages, or imbedded in a material covered with plaster which was used for mummy cases and in one instance was found wrapped around entombed crocodiles, whose bodies were also stuffed with the same material. The oldest specimen was found at Sakkara in 1893 and is dated 3580 B.C.

¹ It was made from the pith of a plant which grew in great abundance in the Nile and its marshes, and was turned out in the form of sheets, from 3 to 9 inches wide, which were glued together so as to form a roll, varying in length according to the space required for the writing, but scarcely ever more than 30 feet long. The writing was arranged in narrow vertical columns, and, in using the manuscript, the reader unrolled it with his right hand, and rolled it up with his left.

² The preservation of the papyri discovered at Herculaneum in the eighteenth century was due to the proximity of Mount Vesuvius.

Comparatively few of the fragments which have been discovered relate to the New Testament, and any information these afford regarding its text is of a very meagre character. The oldest of them were discovered at Oxyrhynchus, and are usually assigned to the third or fourth century. Two of them contain only eighteen and thirty-two verses respectively, of our first and fourth Gospels, but another has about a third of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and is all the more precious because one of our most ancient manuscripts is very defective in that epistle. To the Biblical student the chief value of the papyri lies in the information they afford regarding the form and appearance of the New Testament autographs and their copies during the first three centuries, and the characteristics of the language and literature of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, when the Old Testament was translated into Greek and the New Testament writings (a little later) came into existence. It is now apparent that the language of the New Testament has much more in common with the colloquial Greek of the period than was formerly supposed to be the case; and the study of the papyri has

thrown considerable light on the orthography, grammar, and vocabulary of the sacred writings.

Probably most of the New Testament papyri were inscribed by private individuals, who were not likely to copy with much precision, and would be ready to make interesting additions to the text whenever they had any kind of authority for doing so. Even in the cities few of the Christians would be able to employ professional scribes to make copies for them, and there would not be such a large demand for the sacred writings as to induce the booksellers to take an interest in their sale, as they did in the case of some of the classical works. In course of time, however, the demand increased; by the middle of the second century there must have been thousands of copies in circulation, and within a century afterwards we find slaves put at the disposal of Origen for the purpose of acting as scribes, their work being revised by his friend and follower Pamphilus, who used to carry about copies with him for distribution.

In the fourth century papyrus began to be superseded by vellum, which was not unknown even in the first century, as we see from Paul's

reference to “parchments” in II Timothy 4¹³, which were probably manuscripts of the Old Testament. About the same time as the vellum began to come into general use for the Christian writings, the roll gave place to the book; and in this and other respects more attention began to be paid to the external appearance of the Scriptures, largely owing to the adoption of Christianity by the Roman emperor.¹

The copying of manuscripts soon became an important industry both at episcopal sees and in monasteries, and a great deal of art was often expended on the work. Sometimes the parchment used was of a purple colour, and in some cases the lettering was executed in gold and silver ink. The titles and initial

¹ We read of Constantine giving an order to Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, for fifty copies of a very fine quality, suitable for use in the churches of his eastern capital. Two of these appear to have survived to the present day, the Codex Vaticanus and the Codex Sinaiticus, which probably emanated from Egypt. The latter was rescued from oblivion nearly fifty years ago, having been found in the monastery of St. Catherine, Mount Sinai, by the famous critic, Tischendorf, and now lies in the Library of St. Petersburg. It is written on snow-white vellum, supposed to have been made from the skins of antelopes.

lines were usually in red, and the initial letters were beautifully ornamented. In one case (Ev. 16) four different colours of ink were used, the words of the evangelist being written in green, those of Jesus in red, those of the apostles in blue, and those of the enemies of Jesus in black. By and by pictorial illustrations were added, and the style of production became so luxurious as to provoke the censure of some of the monastic Orders. This led to a reaction for a time, but the ornamental style had again set in before the appearance of the first printed Bible (in 1456), which was also the first printed book. By that time paper had come into general use. It first made its appearance in Europe in the tenth century, but the oldest Greek manuscript of this material that has been preserved dates only from the thirteenth century.

There are extant numerous manuscripts of a later date than the sixth century, but the only Greek manuscripts of an earlier date that have come down to us, in addition to the papyrus fragments, are the Codex Vaticanus (B), at Rome, and the Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲙ) at St. Petersburg, both of the fourth century ;

the Codex Alexandrinus (A) in the British Museum, and the Codex Ephræmi (C) at Paris, both of the fifth century; the Codex Bezaë (D) presented to Cambridge University by the reformer in 1581, of the fifth or sixth century;¹ and a manuscript of the Gospels recently discovered in Egypt and acquired by an American named Freer, supposed to date from the fourth century, which is to be known as the Washington (W).

If it be asked what has become of the rest of the manuscripts, it is not difficult to give an answer. As regards papyri, their existence would probably be confined during the first two centuries to Alexandria and its neighbourhood, where the soil and climate would be too damp to admit of their preservation, unless special means were employed for the purpose. This was very unlikely to be done, both because the material was too cheap to be worth preserving, and because the improvements in writing which were gradually introduced rendered the later manuscripts more legible

¹The former date is preferred by Prof. Burkitt. See his article, "The Date of Codex Bezaë" in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. III. (1901-2), pp. 501-13.

and therefore more valuable. As regards manuscripts of a more substantial nature, we know that many of them were destroyed in the persecutions to which Christians were subjected. Gildas, the historian, tells us that in Britain great piles of them were burned during the persecutions of the third century; and in the Diocletian persecution in the beginning of the next century immense numbers were destroyed by imperial edict, many of them having been given up to the authorities by their owners to escape punishment.¹ Great havoc was also wrought on this and other forms of church property in succeeding centuries in connexion with the successive invasions of the Roman Empire.

Notwithstanding all this, however, it is estimated that there are about two thousand five hundred different Greek manuscripts still extant in whole or in part; or, if we include

¹ Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea (who lived to see Christianity adopted as the religion of the Empire), says: "With mine own eyes I beheld the houses of prayer being plucked down and razed to the ground, and the divine and sacred Scriptures being consigned to the flames in the public market-places."

lectionaries, about four thousand. In this respect the New Testament is in a far superior position not only to the Old Testament but to almost all the classical works of antiquity.¹ They fall into two classes, the Uncials (numbering about 160, most of them fragments), in which the characters are large and written separately, and the Minuscules or Cursives, dating from the eighth century, when the running hand, which had been previously used in private correspondence only, began to be adopted for literary purposes.

There is another kind of evidence, available

¹ For example, of the plays of Sophocles there are about a hundred manuscripts; of Æschylus less than fifty; of Catullus there are only three; of the Annals of Tacitus only one complete; and in each of these cases the earliest manuscript is more than a thousand years later than the original. A few of the ancient classics are represented by hundreds of manuscripts, but in no case does any manuscript come so near its original as the Codex Vaticanus does. Papyri as early as the first century have been recently discovered, containing some of the works of Homer, Isocrates, and Aristotle; but even this leaves a longer interval between the composition and the date of the earliest manuscript than is the case with the New Testament.

to a very slight extent in the case of secular literature, that comes to the aid of the Greek manuscripts, and enables us to go back to an early period in the history of the text. We refer to the Versions, or translations of the New Testament writings, ranging from the second to the ninth century. Owing to the wide prevalence of Greek throughout the Roman Empire the need for such aids does not seem to have been felt till near the close of the second century, though oral translation in church seems to have been in use long before that time. Even as late as 200-230 A.D. we find Greek freely employed by a Roman ecclesiastic, Hippolytus. But a little before that time two versions appear to have come into existence—a Syriac one in the East, and a Latin one in the West, the latter occasioned by the needs of the Church in Africa. The Egyptian or Coptic version was probably more than a century later, and was followed by the Gothic and Armenian (the latter through the Syriac) in the fourth century, the Georgian and Ethiopic (both through the Syriac) in the fifth century, and a number of others still later,—the work of the missionary then, as

now, frequently calling for a translation of the Scriptures into the vernacular.¹

Although the oldest extant manuscripts of versions date only from the fourth century, they carry us back to the period in which the version was produced, if we are sure that we have the genuine text; and our knowledge of the date, and, to a certain extent, of the place of its production, is a great help in determining the value of the testimony borne by a version to a particular reading, and its relation to other authorities. There may sometimes be a difference of opinion as to what its testimony really is, owing to the want of exact correspondence between its language and that of the original; but where the translation is of a literal character—as it is, for example, in the case of the old Latin version—the language of the original in a disputed passage may be inferred with a near approach to certainty. Even the errors of the translator sometimes indicate quite plainly what word he had before

¹ It is estimated that there are about 8000 manuscripts in Latin, and probably more than 1000 in the other languages above mentioned. They are frequently bilingual, having the Greek on one side and the version on the other.

him in the Greek ; while in a question of the omission or insertion of a clause, an ordinary version speaks as plainly as a manuscript in the original. When the testimony of a version is clear and unmistakable, its confirmation of a reading may be more valuable, especially if supported by another version, than if it were in Greek, owing to the improbability of a passage being corrupted in the same way in two, and still less in three or more, different languages.

There is another kind of evidence that goes back to a still earlier period than either manuscripts or versions, namely, the quotations from the New Testament which are to be found in the writings of early Christian writers usually spoken of as the Church Fathers. Of these writers there are nearly a hundred anterior to the date of the earliest manuscript ; and they sometimes expressly refer to the manuscripts in their hands and the various readings to be found in them. The value of their testimony, however, is much impaired by the fact that having no concordance to consult, and no division of the text into chapters and verses, perhaps not even having a manuscript beside them, they had frequently to quote

from memory. The result is that their citations cannot always be identified, much less accepted as correct, especially when they are brief—so brief that the writer did not think it worth while to undo his roll, if he had one, to reproduce the exact words. We have to remember that the patristic writings, like the Greek manuscripts and the versions, were liable to corruption through the mistakes of scribes, especially in the case of quotations from Scripture, in which they would not feel so much need to attend to what was before them. But when there is reason to believe that a passage contains a careful and accurate quotation from Scripture, it bears witness to the reading current in the writer's time and country, and may afford valuable confirmation of a reading found elsewhere, though little reliance could be placed upon it if it stood alone. In the matter of early and frequent quotations, as in regard to manuscript authorities, the New Testament books occupy a better position than most of the ancient classics.¹ Towards the end of the second cen-

¹ For example, the *Annals* of Tacitus, already referred to, is not distinctly mentioned till the fifteenth century,

ture their contents are reproduced in great abundance.

As the New Testament writings had originally little or no connexion with one another, and, after their unity had begun to be recognized, were too extensive to be conveniently written on a single roll or codex, it was not to be expected that they could be transmitted through the hands of so many readers in different parts of the world, for fourteen centuries before the invention of printing, without undergoing considerable alterations. As a matter of fact, they had not been a century in existence before many corruptions had crept into the text, due partly to the imperfect way in which the copying had been done by the Christians themselves or by those whose services they were able to engage at a rate suitable to their humble means; partly to the fact that the sacred writings were not then treated with the reverential care with which they were guarded at a later period, when their authority was although there is what may possibly be an allusion to it in a work of the fifth century. Livy is not quoted for a century, Thucydides for two centuries, after he wrote; while Herodotus is only quoted twice for two hundred years after his death.

fully recognized by the Church; and partly also to the disappearance, through wear and tear, of papyrus leaves or portions of leaves, and the consequent attempts to fill up the gaps. Alterations were sometimes deliberately made for the purpose of improving the style, or to harmonize passages, or with the intention of correcting supposed errors in the text—a practice which has often led to confusion. In a few cases the object seems to have been to strengthen a doctrinal position or to refute a heresy; and we know that several heretical sects had a recension of certain books of the Bible to suit their own views.¹

A famous instance of corruption is found at I John 5⁷, which originated in the Vulgate towards the close of the fourth century: “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.” The verse is only found in Latin manuscripts until the fifteenth

¹ They did not share the view expressed by Dr. Johnson in conversation about Kennicott’s edition of the Bible, which it was hoped would be quite faithful: “I know not any crime so great that a man could contrive to commit as poisoning the sources of eternal truth.”

century, when it appears for the first time in a Greek manuscript. It seems to have been a comment by Cyprian, and to have been admitted into the text by mistake. But it obtained a permanent footing and was frequently quoted as an argument for the doctrine of the Trinity. It cannot for a moment be defended, and is omitted as spurious in the English Revised Version. Even in the seventeenth century it was denounced by Sir Isaac Newton, and in the next century by Gibbon and the great classical scholar Porson; but it found a defender in an archdeacon of the Church of England (Travers), and to this day it has never been repudiated by the Church of Rome.

With the gradual unification of the Church throughout the Roman empire and its recognition by Constantine as a national institution, its sacred writings acquired a new importance in the eyes of the community; and their publication in a collective form, which was facilitated by the vellum codices coming into use, afforded a new security for the preservation of the text. Every precaution was taken by the Church to prevent alterations or additions by

heretical writers, though there was still a danger of accidental errors occurring in the process of transcription, and of well-meant additions being made through the inclusion of marginal notes. Almost all the corruptions known to us had made their appearance before our great manuscripts were written, so that even if a papyrus older than any extant manuscript were yet to be discovered, its value as a witness would depend upon its character and history, which would have to be carefully investigated. There is some reason to believe that a general revision of the Greek text took place in the beginning of the third century, and it is certain that both Irenæus and Origen took a great interest in textual questions. Origen, especially, perhaps the greatest Biblical scholar that has ever lived, came across many perplexing varieties of readings which he frequently discusses, telling us which reading is to be found "in most manuscripts," in "the oldest manuscripts," or in "the best manuscripts." A hundred and fifty years later we find Jerome complaining that there were almost as many texts as codices, although, in preparing the Vulgate, he seems to have been very cautious

about departing from the text of the old Latin version.

In these circumstances, we cannot be surprised that the modern critic should find a great amount of diversity in the texts of the extant manuscripts, and that he should often have the greatest difficulty in deciding on the claims of competing words and phrases. Although the manuscripts are very seldom dated, their age can generally be determined with more or less accuracy from their style of penmanship, punctuation, and arrangement. Generally speaking, the older a manuscript is, the more weight is to be attached to its testimony. Yet the age of a manuscript is not an absolutely safe criterion of its value, for it is quite possible that of two manuscripts dating from the same century, one may have been copied directly from a very pure and ancient source, while the other may have a much less noble pedigree and embody the faults of many exemplars from which it has been successively derived. It will readily be understood, therefore, that when the scholars of Western Christendom, soon after the Renaissance, took in hand the preparation of an authentic text of

the New Testament, they entered upon a work of very great difficulty—a work, indeed, of far greater magnitude and complexity than they had any conception of.

As might have been expected, the work has been mainly done by Protestants. To them it has seemed a more vital question than to Roman Catholics, owing to the supreme importance which they attach to Scripture, rendering any uncertainty about its text a much more serious thing for them than for those who have Tradition to fall back upon. In a sense the Roman Catholics were precluded from inquiry, as the Council of Trent declared the Latin Vulgate¹ to be the only authorized form of the Scriptures. But scholarly instinct has sometimes asserted itself in spite of ecclesiastical prepossessions. About the beginning of the seventeenth cen-

¹ A recension of an earlier Latin version, prepared by Jerome at the request of Pope Damasus, and published 383 A.D. The text approved by the Roman Catholic Church is that of the edition authorized by Pope Clement VIII in 1592, but a new edition is now in preparation by a Commission of Benedictines appointed by Pope Pius X in 1908. Quite recently a critical text of the Vulgate New Testament has been published by the Clarendon Press and the British and Foreign Bible Society.

ture Lucas of Bruges recognized that the true text could only be determined by taking into account all the three sources of information already referred to. Nearly a century later notable service was rendered to the cause of historical criticism by Richard Simon, a French Oratorian, who anticipated principles of Textual Criticism which are now generally accepted. He incurred the displeasure of his ecclesiastical superiors and had ultimately to leave the Order. Two of his works were translated into English in 1689 and 1692, which may be regarded as a sign of the interest already taken in the movement in this country, due in large measure to the gift in 1628 of the Alexandrine manuscript of the whole Bible to Charles I by Cyril Lucar, Patriarch of Constantinople, and previously of Alexandria, where the manuscript was found.

After the invention of printing, the first edition of the Greek New Testament published was that of Erasmus, which appeared in 1516 and was described as “*ad Græcam veritatem . . . accurate recogniti*,” though he had done the work very hurriedly and had consulted very few manuscripts, none of them earlier

than the tenth century. In 1522 there appeared the Complutensian Polyglot of the Spanish Cardinal, Ximenes, the printing of which had been begun eight years before. It gave the text of the Greek New Testament and the Latin Vulgate in parallel columns, but, from a critical point of view, it had little or no value, as the manuscripts used, although described by the editor as “antiquissima et emendatissima,” were late and were used without much skill. Almost the same may be said of Stephen’s “Regia” or third edition (Estienne, Paris, 1550), though he made use of two uncial manuscripts (Bezæ and Claromontanus) and thirteen cursives, and furnished an “apparatus criticus” giving “variæ lectiones” in the margin.¹ A few years later, Theodore Beza, Calvin’s successor at Geneva, made a contribution to the cause by publishing a triglot edition of the New Testament, consisting of Greek, Latin, and Syriac—with the addition of Arabic in Acts and the Epistles

¹ It is to Stephen we owe our division of Scripture into verses. The division into chapters was the work of Stephen Langton (afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury) in the thirteenth century.

to the Corinthians. A similar service was rendered about the same time (1569-72) by the "Antwerp Polyglot," edited by a Spanish theologian. In 1624 the brothers Elzevir of Leyden published an octavo edition, and in 1633 a revised form of it, containing the announcement: "Textum ergo habes nunc ab omnibus receptum in quo nihil immutatum aut corruptum damus." It was an empty boast, for the text was virtually that of the fifth edition of Erasmus, with the slight alteration made by Beza. The name "Textus Receptus," however, caught the public ear, and was extended in England to Stephen's edition (of which our Authorized Version is a translation), though it was even more defective than the Elzevir, being practically the text of Erasmus's third edition, improved in form by the division into chapters and verses, as the second edition of the Elzevir had been improved by the separation of sentences into verses instead of their being numbered in the margin. The passages in which the two texts differed from one another were less than 300 in number; and both alike represented the traditional text which had been in use in the Greek Church from the fourth century, and

is still to be found in numberless mediæval codices emanating from Constantinople and the monasteries of Mount Athos. It is usually called the Syrian or Antiochian text, and can be clearly traced in the writings of Chrysostom, who spent many years at Antioch before he was appointed Patriarch of Constantinople. This text may have been due to a deliberate and systematic recension in the third or fourth century, but, however this may be, it is in many respects faulty, having many "conflate" readings (formed by a combination of divergent readings, supported by different authorities) which do not represent the original Greek. Under the name of the *Textus Receptus*, however, it gained such a hold on the confidence and affection of the Protestant world, that for more than two centuries it stood in the way of any thorough revision, and was regarded as the standard text by the British and Foreign Bible Society, which circulated many millions of copies of it in all parts of the world, until the adoption of Prof. Nestle's text in 1904.

The first scholar in England to take up a really critical attitude on this subject was Brian Walton, an Episcopal divine, who, after

a chequered career, was appointed to the See of Chester in 1660, on the restoration of Charles II. In the previous year he had brought out his "London Polyglot" in six folio volumes, the first work ever published by subscription in England.¹ It was also the first work in which the Alexandrine Codex was consulted, as were also the Syriac, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, with the addition of the Persian in the case of the Gospels. Investigation was continued by Bishop Fell of Oxford,² who claimed to derive the text of his edition of the New Testament (1675) from more than a hundred manuscripts, including Codex Laudianus of the Acts, which had been re-

¹ It was originally published under the patronage of Cromwell, but after the Restoration a new preface appeared in which the late Protector was styled "Maximus ille draco."

² This is the same Bishop Fell whose name is familiar to us in the well known lines,

I do not like thee, Dr. Fell,
The reason why, I cannot tell ;
But this I know, and know full well,
I do not like thee, Dr. Fell.

The dislike here expressed, however, had no reference to Dr. Fell as a Biblical critic, but as an examiner in Christ Church, Oxford,—the lines having been written by a student to whom he had prescribed a difficult piece of Latin translation.

cently presented to the Bodleian Library by Archbishop Laud, who had obtained it in Germany.

Hitherto the results of textual criticism had been rather of an unsettling character, exciting in some quarters considerable suspicion and distrust, not unlike that which the Higher Criticism aroused in the nineteenth century. When it became known, early in the eighteenth century, as the result of the labours of John Mill in collating manuscripts, versions, and patristic quotations, that there were about thirty thousand various readings in the New Testament, the confidence of the public in the Textus Receptus received a shock. While Protestants were startled and perplexed, Roman Catholics regarded the new results of scholarly research as a proof that "the Protestants had no assured principle for their religion" (Richard Simon). To make matters worse, the Deistic writers of the day claimed the support of the new learning for their infidel views, and affected to believe that it was all over with the belief in a Divine revelation. In Germany devout Protestants shared the anxiety of their brethren in England. "More

than twenty years ago" (said Bengel, writing in 1725), "before Mill appeared, at the very beginning of my academic life, when I happened on an Oxford exemplar, I was greatly distressed by the various readings, but all the more was I driven to examine Scripture carefully, so far as my slender abilities would permit, and afterwards, by God's grace, I got new strength of heart" (Appar. Crit., 2nd ed.; 1763). After a laborious examination of the authorities within his reach, including the manuscripts at Oxford and Paris, Mill published an edition of the New Testament in 1707. Its value lay not so much in the text, into which he imported very few new readings, being content to indicate them in the margin, but in the prolegomena, of which Dr. Scrivener says: "Though by this time too far behind the present state of knowledge to bear reprinting, they comprise a monument of learning such as the world has seldom seen, and contain much information the student will not even now easily find elsewhere."

Mill's attempt to purify the text was not appreciated as it deserved, but he found an able defender in Dr. Bentley, the Master of Trinity

College, Cambridge, who believed in the possibility of arriving at a nearer approach to the original words of Scripture, and was the first to realize fully the strong claim to consideration of the more ancient manuscripts, while at the same time alive to the importance of the early versions and patristic writers. He lamented that the same care had not been taken to restore the text of the New Testament as had been bestowed on the classical works of antiquity. "The New Testament," he wrote, "has been under a hard fate since the invention of printing. . . . No heathen author has had such ill fortune. Terence, Ovid, etc., for the first century after printing, went about with twenty thousand errors in them. But when learned men undertook them, and from the oldest manuscripts set out correct editions, those errors fell and vanished. But if they had kept to the first published text, and set the various lections only in the margin, those classical authors would be as clogged with variations as Dr. Mill's Testament is."

In 1720 Bentley issued his "Proposals," setting forth the principles on which he proposed to amend the text of the New Testament, and

expressing the belief that as the result of his investigations only about two hundred passages would remain in which there would be any room for doubt as to the words of the original. He was disposed to attach great importance to the Latin Vulgate, on the supposition that it had been corrected by Jerome in the light of the best Greek text of his day, and he believed (with a French critic Toinard, who wrote somewhat earlier) that by a comparison of the oldest Greek manuscripts with the Vulgate he would be able to reproduce the true text, which he would find confirmed by the Syriac, Coptic, Gothic, and Ethiopic versions. But his proposed edition of the New Testament never saw the light, partly, it is believed, owing to his finding that the results of collating the Codex Vaticanus did not bear out his theory to the same extent as the evidence of the Codex Alexandrinus had done.

Another great name in the history of Textual Criticism is that of a Lutheran minister already mentioned, John Albert Bengel, who devoted special attention to the manuscripts of South Germany and brought out an edition of the New Testament in 1734. The text, as he

stated, was to embody the marrow of approved editions, but in the margin he gave a large number of various readings arranged in five grades of merit: (1) genuine; (2) better than the readings in the text; (3) equal to the readings in the text; (4) inferior; and (5) not to be approved. His chief service consisted in emphasizing the need for weighing manuscripts, not merely counting them; and in the introduction of a system for the classification of manuscripts according to their geographical connexion, dividing the extant authorities into two classes, African and Asiatic.

Contemporary with Bengel was another learned commentator, Wetstein, who rendered great service as a collator, examining more than a hundred manuscripts, but without much discrimination as to their age and value, and without sufficient study of their mutual relations. To him was due the introduction of letters and numbers to designate manuscripts. A little later, Prof. Semler of Halle developed the idea of classification still further, distinguishing three classes, Alexandrian, Oriental, and Western. Passing over the names of Har-

wood of London, Matthæi of Moscow, Alter of Vienna, and Birch of Copenhagen, who were all more or less distinguished in the work of collating, we find the next distinct advance made by Prof. Griesbach of Halle and Jena, of whom it has been said by Dr. Hort: "What Bengel had sketched tentatively was verified and worked out with admirable patience, sagacity, and candour by Griesbach, who was equally great in independent investigation and in his power of estimating the results arrived at by others." Griesbach made a better use of the critical materials which had now accumulated than any of his contemporaries, though he sometimes pressed his theory too far. He based his classifications largely on the evidence afforded by the versions as to geographical connexion, dividing manuscripts into Western and Alexandrian, and disregarding Bengel's "Asiatic," which he called Constantinopolitan, as being compiled out of the other two.¹

¹ About this time two Roman Catholic professors took part in the controversy. The one was Hug of Freiburg, who drew attention to the importance of patristic quotations, as indicating both the time and place at which certain readings prevailed, and anticipated the conclusion which has now been arrived at as to the prevalence of the

The next great name is that of Carl Lachmann, Professor of Classical Philology in Berlin, who was the first to discard entirely the Textus Receptus, and to build up a text for himself (1831) on the basis of the evidence afforded by the best documentary witnesses. Distinguishing between the Oriental and the Occidental text, he was content to aim at the recovery of the best fourth century text, and for this purpose divided manuscripts into African and Byzantine. He also laid down a number of valuable rules or canons for deciding between competing readings, as had been previously done by Griesbach, and, to some extent, by Bengel. Lachmann's attempt to construct a text for himself was only the first of many similar experiments by subsequent critics, who sought a still nearer approach to the original by going behind the Vulgate and the oldest Greek manuscripts to the versions and Church Fathers of a still earlier date.

The latter half of the nineteenth century was distinguished by the critical achievements

Western type of text; the other was Scholz of Bonn, who collected upwards of six hundred manuscripts, but collated few of them, and was somewhat of a reactionary in his views.

of a number of eminent scholars, whose names will always be associated with this branch of theological inquiry. Most of them were Englishmen, but perhaps the greatest of them all was Tischendorf, Professor of Theology at Leipsic, who visited many lands and spent an immense amount of labour in the attempt to make himself acquainted with the best documentary authorities, particularly the oldest Greek manuscripts—the libraries at Patmos and Sinai engaging his special attention. Tischendorf was a most voluminous writer and editor as well as a careful and diligent collator. The most valuable of his numerous editions of the New Testament is the eighth (*Octava Critica Major*), which was reissued by Caspar René Gregory and Dr. Ezra Abbot with prolegomena, forming a wonderful store of all the knowledge then available on the subject. He also helped to develop the principles of Textual Criticism, from a scientific point of view, by subdividing Lachmann's classification of manuscripts into Alexandrian and Latin, Asiatic and Byzantine, and by laying down a number of additional rules for appraising the value of readings.

Among his contemporaries, Tischendorf had only one rival in this field of scholarship, namely, Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, who was equal to him in ability and zeal, but less fortunate in his discoveries and more cautious in coming to conclusions. While Tischendorf published more than twenty editions of the New Testament in little more than thirty years, Tregelles was content to issue one edition, after twenty years' preparation for it. The critical principles of the two men agreed in the main, although they did not always arrive at the same conclusions.

In contrast with them we may place Dr. Scrivener, Prebendary of Exeter, and Dr. Burgon of Chichester, who represented more conservative tendencies. In his "Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament" Dr. Scrivener says: "All that can be inferred from searching into the history of the sacred text amounts to no more than this: that extensive variations, arising no doubt from the wide circulation of the New Testament in different regions and among nations of diverse languages, subsisted from the earliest period to which our records extend. Beyond this

point our investigations cannot be carried without indulging in pleasant speculations which may amuse the fancy but cannot inform the sober judgment." Dean Burgon went still further than this in depreciation of the study, denouncing the attempt to improve the received text by comparing it with ancient manuscripts. The value of these manuscripts he was disposed to estimate in the inverse ratio of their antiquity, holding that it was in consequence of their having been little esteemed and little used that they had survived better and more authentic texts. Such opinions can only be held by those who believe that the very words of scripture were not only dictated by the Divine Spirit but have also been preserved by Divine providence,—a theory of which most men find a practical refutation in the fact that various readings have been found in the text of the New Testament as far back as testimony carries us, and that it is even possible that some of these readings may have been due to amendments made upon later copies by the sacred writers themselves. In the collation of minuscules both Scrivener and Burgon did good service, and the latter also made a notable

collection of patristic quotations from the New Testament.

During the period to which we have just referred, two events occurred in the English-speaking world which showed how little sympathy was felt by the leading Biblical scholars with the opinions represented by Dean Burgon, and at the same time marked the progress which had been made in working out the principles of a scientific Textual Criticism. We refer to the issue in 1881 of the Revised English Version of the New Testament, prepared by a Commission of British and American scholars, and the publication, in the same year, of Westcott and Hort's "New Testament in Greek," with its elaborate introduction on the principles and methods of Textual Criticism. While the main object of the Revision was to correct errors in translation, the emendation of the text was not overlooked. As the Revisers in their preface state: "A revision of the Greek text was the necessary foundation of our work; but it did not fall within our province to construct a continuous and complete Greek text." One of the rules they laid down was that the text to be adopted should

be "that for which the evidence is decidedly preponderating,"—a rule which could only be faithfully carried out by an earnest endeavour to arrive at a just verdict with regard to every disputed reading, without partiality and without prejudice. Accordingly we find that nearly 6000 new readings were adopted (mainly in accordance with Westcott and Hort's text), notwithstanding the fact that the Commission included Dr. Scrivener, the most influential representative of the conservative school. The value of Westcott and Hort's work lay chiefly in systematizing the results previously arrived at, and in the further development and application of the "genealogical" principle for the classification of the authorities. Recognizing that any classification is necessarily imperfect owing to the mixture of texts which is to be found in almost every manuscript, they hit upon the expedient of grouping together the witnesses in favour of any reading in question, and then appraising the value of their united testimony by a series of experiments in other disputed passages where the true reading had been already ascertained. This is called the "Internal

Evidence of Groups," just as the general character of an individual manuscript, when similarly tested, comes under Internal Evidence of Documents. It may be questioned whether these principles and methods will ever be much improved upon, but the conclusions derived from their application are naturally subject to revision.

Even those who cannot accept Westcott and Hort's conclusions ought to admire the candour and impartiality with which they have done their work. It was charged against them and the other Revisers by Canon Liddon that they had treated the matter as a literary rather than as a religious enterprise. In a sense this was their merit. If they had been guided by their feelings rather than by their judgment, they would have retained a number of passages, insufficiently attested, which had endeared themselves to the heart of Christendom or had rendered service as witnesses for doctrinal truths. Of the former we have examples in the first of the Seven Words from the Cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," and in the account of the Saviour's agony in Gethsemane; both of which

are excluded from the text by Westcott and Hort, but are retained by the Revisers with a marginal note, stating, in the one case, that *some*, in the other, that *many* "ancient authorities omit." The exclusion of these passages from the text does not imply that they are not authentic records. On the contrary, Westcott and Hort express a conviction that they are "the most precious remains of the evangelical traditions, written or oral, which were rescued from oblivion by the scribes of the second century."¹ Another familiar expression which the Revisers would fain have retained in the text, if they could have honestly done so, is the doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer in Matt. 6¹³.²

¹ The Jewish writer, Montefiore, therefore, in his recent work on the Synoptic Gospels, in which he pays a high tribute to the character and teaching of Jesus, is in error when he infers from the exclusion of the First Word from the cross that the noblest and most original sayings ascribed to Jesus are not always authentic.

² Yet we find Dean Goulburn, in his *Life of Dr. Burgon*, saying: "Are not these three passages alone—the record of the agony, the record of the first saying on the cross, and the Doxology of the Lord's Prayer—passages of such value as to make it wrong and cruel to shake the faith of ordinary Bible readers in them?"

Illustrations of the Revisers' readiness to give up traditional evidence for the divinity of Christ, when it formed no part of the original text, are found in their substitution of ὁς for Θεὸς in I Timothy 3¹⁶, making the verse read, "He who was manifested in the flesh," instead of "God manifest in the flesh," and in the omission of Acts 8³⁷, "and Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." They were even willing to prefer a reading which implied inaccuracy on the part of the Evangelist in quoting from the Old Testament, e.g. in Mark 1², "As it is written in Isaiah the prophet," instead of "As it is written in the prophets,"—on the principle that it was more likely the original was altered in order to correct the mistake, than that the mistake had crept into the text through the error of a copyist.

Since the publication of the Revisers' monumental work several new editions of the Greek New Testament have made their appearance, the most notable being "The Resultant Greek Testament" (3rd edition, 1905), by the late R. F. Weymouth, which repre-

sents the general consensus of former leading editors; and the more recent text of Prof. Nestle of Maulbronn (7th edition, 1908), based on a stricter selection of authorities, and furnished with additional information of a critical nature. A new edition of the text used by the Revisers (Oxford, 1881), with a fresh critical apparatus prepared by Prof. Souter, has recently been published (1910).¹

But finality in this field of labour has by no means yet been attained. Much still requires to be done, and much is being done, to secure an accurate text of the different versions and of the Church Fathers, and new manuscripts are making their appearance which may throw new light on disputed points. In 1882 a palimpsest copy of the Gospels in Syriac was obtained by Mrs. Lewis from the same convent in which Tischendorf found the Codex Sinaiticus. The original writing, which had been temporarily effaced, apparently in the eighth

¹ The first volume of an elaborate work by Prof. von Soden of Berlin, which undertakes to give the oldest attainable form of the New Testament text, and has had the advantage of a wider examination of minuscules than any previous edition of the New Testament, was published in 1912.

century, to make way for an entertaining account of the lives of women saints, has been in a great measure restored by means of a chemical agent. It is believed to represent an older form of the Syriac than even the Curetonian manuscript, which was brought from Egypt in 1842, and edited by Dr. W. Cureton, of the British Museum. Until that time the Peshitta had been regarded as the original form of the Syriac version, but it is now supposed to have been the work of Rab-bula, Bishop of Edessa in the fifth century, and to have been introduced into the churches of his diocese for the purpose of superseding the *Diatessaron* of Tatian, which had been in use there for more than two hundred years.

The Sinaitic Syriac contains several fresh readings of an interesting nature. In Matthew 2², after the words "Where is he that is born King of the Jews," it has the words "for we have seen His star from the east," not "in the east"—indicating that the *rise* of the fateful star had been observed by the Chaldæan astrologers. And in John 1⁴¹ it says of Andrew: "At dawn of day he findeth his own brother and saith to him, We have found the Messiah."

This is very likely to be the true reading, *πρωί* in the Greek having been mistaken for *πρωτον* owing to its being followed by *τὸν*.

But the testimony of this new manuscript has still more important bearings of a general nature. Agreeing, as it usually does, with the Old Latin Version, it has materially altered the balance of evidence with regard to the value of the Western text, which Westcott and Hort held in little esteem, and it has imparted a new interest to the chief representative of that text, Codex Bezaë; though, on the other hand, an Armenian manuscript of the Gospels, assigned to the tenth century, which was discovered in 1891 by F. C. Conybeare, lends some support to Westcott and Hort's high estimate of the Codex Vaticanus, by a note which goes far to explain and justify the blank left in that codex where the last twelve verses of the Gospel of Mark are usually found. The note consists of two words inserted in the blank space, namely, "The Presbyter Ariston's," from which we may infer that the omitted passage was attributed by the scribe to "Aristion," one of the personal followers of the Lord, from whom

Papias tells us that he had been in the habit of collecting information to supplement the written Word.¹

That the Western text was the predominant one in the second century is evident from the oldest versions as well as from the writings of the early Church Fathers; but it is open to question whether it represents a primitive Greek text or was gradually formed by a series of accretions. Another cognate question is, Where did the Latin version originate, and what were its historic relations to the Syriac version? The Western text is remarkable for the number of its additions and interpolations, especially in the Third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, and it has been suggested that the peculiar readings in these books may have been derived from early Greek sources. Another characteristic of this text, especially in Luke's works, is that it frequently offers an alternative rendering of such a nature that it

¹ There are two other forms of this supposititious passage, one (shorter), for which the chief authority is Codex Regius of the eighth century, and another (from which Jerome quotes in his "Dialogue against the Pelagians") that is found in no other Greek manuscript but the *Washington* already mentioned.

is difficult to find a reason for rejecting either. So much is this the case that Prof. Blass and Sir William Ramsay are disposed to attribute these variations to the issue of a second edition of his works by Luke himself, the first edition of the Gospel, in the opinion of Blass, having been prepared for Theophilus, and the second edition for the Church in Rome; while in the case of Acts he supposes the order to have been reversed.

Recently a new theory has been advanced by Prof. von Soden, involving a new classification of manuscripts, for which he has also invented a new notation. A leading feature in this theory is that the Diatessaron of Tatian was largely responsible for the corruption of the Greek text of his day. Fresh problems are thus always rising up. In their solution we may hope that the ingenuity of critics will be aided not only by a more exact presentation of the evidence already known to exist, but also by the discovery of fresh documents, especially in the form of papyri, the search for which is now being earnestly carried on. A new factor in the situation is that all such documentary evidence can now be rendered

widely available for examination by means of photographic reproduction. Whatever happens, there is no reason to expect that the integrity of the text will ever be more seriously affected than it is at present, but rather the reverse. We may look forward to the future of Textual Criticism with interest but without misgiving, as our successors will probably be doing a hundred years hence.

Absolute certainty on this subject will never be attained. But meanwhile what shall we say of the results of the studies and investigations which have been carried on for the last three or four hundred years? Instead of the 30,000 readings reckoned up by Mill, their number is now estimated to be not far short of 200,000, counting the same reading again and again, as often as it occurs in a passage where a different reading is also found; while the number of different Greek manuscripts, in which the New Testament is found in whole or in part, has also been multiplied. The increase of numbers need not alarm us, for in the multitude of witnesses, as of counsellors, there is safety. One advantage we derive is that there is little or no need for conjectural

emendation, as there is in the case of the Old Testament and the Apocryphal literature. Moreover, the passages in which there are textual difficulties are far less numerous than in other ancient literature, and it may be confidently asserted that even if all the words in dispute were to be cut out of the New Testament, it would not affect a single doctrine of the Christian faith or a single important fact in the Gospel history. It was said by Dr. Bentley, referring to the state of matters in his day : “ Make your thirty thousand as many more, if numbers of copies can ever reach that sum : all the better to a knowing and a serious reader, who is thereby more richly furnished to select that which he sees genuine. But even put them into the hands of a knave or a fool, and yet with the most sinistrous and absurd choice, he shall not extinguish the light of any one chapter, or so disguise Christianity but that every feature of it will still be the same.” A hundred and fifty years later, we find Westcott and Hort declaring that “ the words still subject to doubt only make up about one-sixtieth of the whole New Testament,” and that “ the amount of what can in any sense

be called substantial variation is but a small part of the whole residuary variation, and can hardly form more than a thousandth part of the entire text.”

In these circumstances, it may perhaps be thought that the questions involved in Textual Criticism are merely of an academic nature, with little or no bearing on the practical interests of the Christian religion, and that the subject is scarcely worthy of the immense amount of time and learned labour which has been expended on it. This is by no means the case, for even if the results were less important than they are, the subject is one which could not be neglected without reproach by any Church which has in its service professors of sacred learning and an educated ministry. If the discovery of the North or the South Pole is regarded by explorers as a worthy object of ambition, for which they are willing to make great sacrifices without having the prospect of deriving any practical advantage from it, we surely cannot but appreciate and admire the zealous and painstaking efforts of scholars to ascertain the very words of Scripture. As Bengel says: “The

smallest particle of gold is gold, but we must not allow that to pass as gold which has not been proved." Or, to quote the words of a recent editor who rendered notable service in this department (Dr. Nestle): "Whoever should conclude that New Testament criticism has reached its goal, would greatly err. As the archæologist in Olympia or Delphi exhumes the scattered temples, and essays to recombine the fragments in their ancient splendour, so much labour is still needed before all the stones shall have been collected, and the sanctuary of the New Testament writings restored to its original form."

The following enumeration by Prof. von Soden of tasks still to be accomplished (quoted by Prof. Souter in his work on "The Text and Canon of the New Testament") will give the reader some idea of what still remains to be done in this field of scholarship: "An investigation of the history of the European Latin pre-Hieronymian version, with the reconstruction of its original form as goal; a collection as critically sifted as possible of all patristic citations in the Greek and Latin languages prior to the date \pm 325, but including Augustine's; at the same time the treatment of citations by translators of Greek patristic works into Latin is to be tested; a sys-

tematic investigation of all patristic citations in the fourth century, to fix whether and how far the recensions have persisted in their original words (vocabulary); monographs on single manuscripts or groups of manuscripts, including the previous history and the character of the therein reproduced text and the history of the manuscript; a restoration of the archetype of the bilingual edition of Paul on the basis of D.E.F.G., a task complete in itself and not difficult nor tedious, which could be accomplished by a university seminar for textual criticism in two terms; a fixing of the possible interworkings between the Egyptian translations and Greek texts, specially the H text, as also of the direct relations between the Sahidic and Bohairic translations in their original forms and their possible stages of development; the translation of Ulfilas, source and causes of its divergences from K (after the manner of Odefoy, "Das gotische Lukas-Evangelium," 1908); revision of the Wordsworth-White text of Jerome, the establishment of the principles followed by Jerome in his revision of the Old-Latin text, as also of the Greek text consulted by him in connexion with this; the Greek texts behind the later Oriental translations, so far as they are made directly from Greek (this has as yet been fixed more or less exactly only for the Armenian and the Ethiopic)."

CHAPTER III

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO S. MATTHEW ¹

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO S. MARK

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO S. LUKE

IN taking up in succession the different parts of the New Testament and dealing shortly with the various critical problems to which they have given rise, we shall begin with the Gospels, not because they stand first in the New Testament, nor yet because they came first in the order of publication, which we have no reason to believe was the case, but because they embody the earliest traditions of the Christian Church, and contain the chief record of the facts concerning the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which lie at the

¹ The titles prefixed to the several Books of the New Testament, like the subscriptions appended to many of the Epistles, formed no part of the original manuscripts, and were the work of copyists.

foundation of our faith. We say the *chief* record, for it must not be imagined that if we lost the testimony of the four Gospels we should be left altogether destitute of information on this all-important subject. The Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Hebrews contain various references to Christ's life and teaching; and in the undisputed Epistles of Paul, written within a generation after the death of the Saviour, we find allusions to His incarnation, His appointment of apostles, His institution of preaching and of the Lord's Supper, His betrayal and crucifixion, His resurrection and ascension, and the supreme authority committed to His trust. It is not too much to say that the study of these Epistles gives one the impression that the story of Christ's death and resurrection was the chief theme of the great Apostle's preaching—two passages of I Corinthians in particular affording direct evidence of this (11²³⁻²⁷ and 15¹⁻⁷).

But while great value attaches to Paul's letters in this as well as in other respects, the Gospels will always be the most precious part of Scripture in the estimation of the Church,

and the authenticity of their contents will always be the most important question with which criticism can deal. Happily, as regards the dates assigned to them by the most competent critics, the Gospels now stand in a much more favourable position than they did fifty years ago, when, according to the widely received views of the Tübingen school, they were supposed to have come into existence in the middle or end of the second century. The change of opinion has been due partly to the more thorough investigation of old evidence, and partly to the discovery of fresh documents. It never admitted of doubt that in the last quarter of the second century the four Gospels which we possess were widely circulated in all parts of Christendom, being used for public worship and for private reading by innumerable Christians who regarded them as the sacred depository of a Divine revelation. But until lately many scholars were disposed to doubt whether they could be traced back in their present form to a much earlier period. In particular it was questioned whether the "memoirs of the apostles," frequently referred to by Justin Martyr about the

middle of the second century, were identical with our Gospels. But any reason there ever was for such a doubt has been largely removed by the testimony afforded by Tatian's "Diatessaron," a work which was hardly known to scholars in more than name till near the close of last century. Tatian was a pupil of Justin, and the title of his work naturally suggested that it was intended to be a harmony of the four Gospels. This was disputed, however, until an Arabic translation of the work came to light, and was published at Rome, along with a Latin translation, in 1888, on the occasion of the jubilee of Leo XIII. An examination of these documents, along with an Armenian and a Latin translation of a Syrian commentary on Tatian's work by Ephræm of Edessa (c. A.D. 373), which had previously come to light, has proved that the "Diatessaron" was undoubtedly a compilation from the four Gospels which we possess. Another work from which fresh testimony has been derived is "The Refutation of All Heresies" by Hippolytus, an eminent Roman ecclesiastic, who wrote near the end of the second century. A manuscript of it was found on Mount Athos in 1842, and

was published in 1851. On examination it was found to contain many quotations from earlier Christian writers, chiefly heretics, including Basilides, an eminent Gnostic who wrote about A.D. 125. These quotations contain many allusions to the Gospels and other parts of the New Testament, and the allusions are of such a nature as to imply that the writings referred to held a position of authority in the Church and were considered to be on a level with the Old Testament Scriptures—a position which it must have taken them a considerable time to attain.

Again, in the “Didaché,” or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, which was discovered in the library of the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem at Constantinople in 1873, and is usually assigned to the beginning of the second century, we find distinct echoes of expressions used in our Gospels, especially in that of Matthew. In this connexion mention may also be made of the “Apology” of Aristides, an Athenian philosopher (*c.* A.D. 140), which was discovered, in the form of a Syrian translation, about thirty years ago in St. Catherine’s, Mount Sinai. Being addressed to Gentiles resident

in Greece, who could not be expected to be acquainted with Christian literature, it was not likely to contain many quotations from Scripture, but we find in it allusions to the chief facts of Christ's life, including His birth from a Hebrew virgin and His ascension ; and it appeals to the Gospel for confirmation of these things.

There are other witnesses, of a still earlier date, whose testimony is now much more firmly established than it was half a century ago. Among these are, in particular, Clement of Rome's "Epistle to the Corinthians," written about A.D. 95 ; the seven genuine Epistles of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, written about A.D. 115, while he was on his way to suffer martyrdom at Rome ; and the Epistle addressed to the Philippians, probably within a year afterwards, by Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, a disciple of the Apostle John,—all of which writings show unmistakable signs of acquaintance with one or more of our Gospels. To this we may add the evidence afforded by the fragments of Papias's "Exposition of the Lord's Oracles," preserved by Eusebius. The author of this work, who was

Bishop of Hierapolis about A.D. 135, had been a friend of Polycarp and had a personal acquaintance with a number of those who had been disciples or hearers of the Lord.

All such testimony, before being accepted, has been subjected to severe cross-examination by those who are unfavourable to traditional views. As an illustration of this we may refer to the "Epistle of Barnabas," which is preserved in full in the "Codex Sinaiticus" and in one of the manuscripts discovered at Constantinople in 1873. The work is usually believed to date from the end of the first century, and it contains in the fourth chapter what seems to be a quotation from the Gospel of Matthew, namely, "Many are called but few chosen," preceded by the words, "as it is written," which is the usual formula of quotation from a canonical book. As long as the work was known only through a Latin translation; it was permissible to suggest that the words in question were an interpolation by a translator familiar with our Gospel. This was the line taken by a number of critics, though Hilgenfeld, one of the leaders of the Tübingen school, admitted that the words used

in the original might have been "as Jesus said." When the Greek manuscript came to light, as part of the "Codex Sinaiticus," in 1859, and the Latin translation was found to be correct, it might have been expected that there would be an end of the matter. But instead of that, it was suggested that the quotation might have been taken not from Matthew's Gospel, but from the second Book of Esdras, though the nearest approach to the words in question that is to be found there is: "Many are created but few shall be saved." Another suggestion was that the quotation might be from some apocryphal book now lost, while one eminent critic tried to explain away the formula of quotation as due to a lapse of memory on the part of the writer, who had forgotten where he saw the words.

In estimating the value of the testimony which the Apostolic Fathers bear to the Gospels, it should be remembered that while all their extant writings put together hardly exceed in length the first two of our Gospels, they represent the faith of the Church in many different centres widely distant from one another, in Europe and Asia and perhaps

also in Africa ; and, furthermore, that besides frequently reproducing the language of the Gospels they agree with them in the general tenor of their teaching,—so much so that Bishop Westcott has said with truth that “ the Gospel which the Fathers announce includes all the articles of the ancient Creeds.”

At this point reference may be made to what are called the Apocryphal Gospels, a fairly numerous class of writings which bear in many cases the names of apostles. A collection of them was published nearly a hundred years ago, when an attempt was made to show that they belonged to the same class as the canonical Gospels, and to make out that they had been suppressed in the interests of orthodoxy about the time of the Council of Nice. This was generally felt to be an untenable position, but for some time it was thought by a certain school of critics that the Apocryphal Gospels might be among the narratives referred to in the preface of the Third Gospel, and that their contents would be found to illustrate the conflicting forces which, according to the Tübingen theory, were struggling for the mastery in the primitive

Church ; while the canonical Gospels represented the resultant policy of compromise which was generally adopted in the second century. But fuller investigation has proved that nearly all those extraneous writings show signs of dependence on one or more of our Gospels, and that they were composed either to gratify curiosity with regard to topics little dealt with in the canonical writings, such as the early life of Jesus and of Mary His mother, or to bolster up some heresy, generally of a Gnostic character. Several of them were in existence in the second century, and may contain some authentic traditions not found in our Gospels ; e.g., the Gospel according to the Hebrews (assigned by some critics to the end of the first century), of which fragments have been preserved for us by Jerome ; the Gospel of the Egyptians, to which the seven sayings of our Lord discovered in Egypt about twenty years ago may have belonged ; and the Gospel of Peter, a considerable part of which was discovered in Egypt in 1886. To the second century may also be assigned the apocryphal "Protevangelium" of James, which deals with the early life of the mother of

Jesus and relates many incidents connected with His birth.

Many works of a similar nature appeared in the course of the next two centuries. Among the books forbidden by the decree of Pope Gelasius in the end of the fifth century was a Gospel of Barnabas, and a few years ago there was published an English translation of a work bearing that title, which was found in an Italian manuscript at Vienna, being apparently the only copy of the work in existence. It seems to have been the result of a manipulation of the canonical Gospels in the interests of Mohammedanism, and represents Jesus as denying that He was the Messiah, and as going up to heaven without dying on the cross, the latter fate being reserved for Judas. Missionaries found the work to be a favourite subject of conversation among Mohammedans in India and Persia, and they urged its publication in order that its spurious character might be exposed.

None of the Apocryphal Gospels seems to have had an extensive circulation; and, speaking generally, we may say that they add nothing of value to our knowledge of

the Saviour's life and teaching, and in their exaggeration and unreality present a striking contrast to the simplicity and sincerity which distinguish the evangelic records in the New Testament.

The history of opinion with regard to the Gospel of Marcion, which is sometimes reckoned among the Apocryphal Gospels, illustrates the trend of criticism, to which we have referred. Marcion was bishop of Pontus in Asia Minor in the early part of the second century. He was one of the first of those Christian idealists, as we may call them, who attach little importance to the historical framework of revelation or to the literal sense of Scripture. Having an intense aversion to Judaism he rejected the whole of the Old Testament; and of the New Testament he accepted only ten Epistles of Paul and a Gospel of his own compilation, setting thus an example of eclecticism, which was followed by many Gnostic sects, each desiring a Gospel to suit its own views. It was evident long ago, from the extensive quotations from Marcion's Gospel which were to be found in the writings of Tertullian, that it had much in common

with our Third Gospel. But those who looked on the latter with suspicion were disposed to regard it as a corrupt expansion of Marcion's work, and therefore posterior to it in date. The result of a more thorough investigation, however, has been to prove to the satisfaction even of extreme critics that the reverse is the case, Marcion's work being nothing but a mutilated edition of the Third Gospel. This obviates what might have been a serious objection to the Lucan authorship of the latter, and bridges over a considerable part of the time anterior to Marcion which has to be accounted for in tracing the history of the book.

The three first Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, have been known as the Synoptic Gospels ever since Griesbach applied the name to them more than a century ago (in contradistinction to the Fourth Gospel), because they present us with a general view of the Saviour's ministry in Galilee. At the same time, each of them has distinct characteristics of its own, which were early recognized and have been frequently illustrated. As early as the second century the four Gospels were supposed to be

symbolically represented by the four faces of the cherubim described in Ezekiel 1¹⁰, namely, those of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle (cf. Rev. 4⁷). Irenæus, Athanasius, Augustine, and Jerome had each a different way of applying the comparison, but Jerome's interpretation, according to which Matthew is identified with the man, Mark with the lion, Luke with the ox, and John with the eagle, is that which is now generally adopted in works of art. Apart from symbolism, the First Gospel may be described as Messianic, exhibiting the life of Jesus, in word and deed, as a fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets, and being thus specially adapted to the tastes and needs of Jewish Christians; the Second depicts Him in relation to the present rather than to the past, and by its graphic picture of His beneficent and victorious energy, was fitted to commend Him to the Roman mind; the Third, written by a Greek, represents Him as the destined Saviour of the whole human race, including even the weak, the poor, the despised; while the Gospel of John, rising superior to all three, carries the thoughts of the reader into a higher region, where there is

neither past, present, nor future—the region of eternity.

The three Synoptics, however, have so much in common, and are so closely related to each other, that it will be convenient to take, in the first instance, a conjunct view of them. As far back as the earliest traditions of the Church extend, we find them attributed to the men whose names they bear; and until near the close of the second century the only thing that caused trouble was the apparent want of harmony in some of their statements. Origen, with his critical eye, could not fail to see discrepancies, and met them by means of allegorical interpretation. Chrysostom argued that, if the agreements of the Evangelists were tokens of their veracity, their disagreements acquitted them of collusion. Augustine held the Second Gospel to be an abbreviation of the First, and attributed divergences to varying powers of memory and the personal idiosyncrasies of the writers. In later times, when the infallibility of Scripture had become an established doctrine, all that could be done was to devise ingenious reconciliations, and, when ingenuity failed, to

take refuge in confessions of human ignorance.

But it was inevitable that in course of time a bolder style of criticism should arise.

The first writer who made a serious attack upon the credibility of the Gospels in this country was Evanson, a clergyman of the Church of England. He published a work in 1792, relating chiefly to the Four Gospels, in which he charged them with containing "gross, irreconcilable contradictions." In Germany, a generation earlier, the honesty of the writers had been challenged by Reimarus, the "Wolfenbüttel Fragmentist," who died in 1768. The fragment which created the greatest sensation was entitled "The Aims of Jesus and His Disciples." After being circulated anonymously in manuscript form, it was published by Lessing (some years after the death of Reimarus), not because he agreed with it, but in order to rouse the Church to a sense of its danger and lead it to strengthen its defences. According to Reimarus, the disciples knew that the aim of Jesus was to prove Himself the Messiah in a political sense, and it was only when their hopes of a temporal kingdom

were blasted by His death upon the cross that they were led, under the influence of the eschatological ideas of the time, to invest His person with a supernatural character and to represent Him as having risen from the dead. Reimarus wrote under the influence of a fierce animosity against the Christian religion, and the virulence of his attack on our Lord and His apostles offended even those who were out of sympathy with orthodox views, the consequence being that for the next fifty years the only opposition which those views had to encounter was of a very mild character, consisting in an attempt to make out that a great deal in the Gospel narratives which seemed to imply miraculous occurrences could be otherwise accounted for. This mode of interpretation culminated in the fully developed rationalism of Paulus (1828), who explained away all the miracles, except the Virgin birth—which some modern theologians treat as an open question. His explanations, which were intended to preserve the good faith of the apostles and yet reconcile the Gospel narrative with the laws of Nature, were often very far-fetched and extremely improbable. At the same time he

had the deepest reverence for the character of Jesus. "The truly miraculous thing about Jesus," he said in his preface, "is Himself, the purity and serene holiness of His character, which is, notwithstanding, genuinely human, and adapted to the imitation and emulation of mankind."

The next great landmark in the history of Gospel Criticism was Strauss's *Life of Jesus* (1835). Strauss tried to get rid of the miraculous, not by rationalistic explanations, nor yet by attributing fraud to the apostles, but by making out the supernatural elements in the narrative to be a mythological growth which had gathered round the memory of Jesus, under the influence of Messianic ideas derived from the Old Testament. As a Hegelian, Strauss regarded historic facts as of little consequence, compared with the ideas embodied in them. The idea of God-manhood he held to be the abiding fruit of the life and teaching of Jesus, over which criticism had no power. In the application of his mythical theory he subjected almost every incident to a close examination, accepting or rejecting in the most arbitrary fashion, reversing the

estimate of the rationalists as to the comparative value of the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel, and holding the latter to be dominated by the ideal Christ in the mind of the writer. He thought the key to the life of Christ was to be found in His eschatology, that is, in His views with regard to the speedy end of the world, which led Him to look for the realization of His Messiahship through superhuman agency.

Ever since Strauss's time, the Gospels have been subjected to severe examination, and every means taken to test the historic reality of the life of Jesus as depicted in the sacred records. In this connexion one of the great problems with which German critics have been grappling during the last fifty years and more has been to determine the real nature of the Messiahship as conceived by Jesus and His disciples, and to ascertain its relation to the Old Testament on the one hand and to Jewish apocalyptic literature on the other.

This is an interesting subject, but it cannot be settled by literary criticism alone. Even when the genuineness of a Gospel is admitted, it is still open to question whether the

language which it attributes to the Saviour was really His own or was put into His mouth by His disciples under the influence of the ideas current in their day, and, if the former, whether He intended the language to be understood in a literal or in a metaphorical, an absolute or a relative, sense. Hence there is the greatest diversity of opinion on the subject even among those who do not stand far apart from each other on the question of authorship and date. According to C. H. Weisse (1838), followed by Holtzmann, Schenkel, and Weizsäcker, Jesus had no sympathy with the apocalyptic visions of later Judaism, and, from the beginning to the end of His ministry, His ideal was spiritual and ethical—although views and expectations of a different kind were attributed to Him by His disciples after His death. Colani (1864) regarded the eschatological elements in the Gospel as due to interpolation, and held that Jesus never aimed at being other than a suffering Messiah. This was the view of Volkmar also (1882), except that he attributed the spurious elements to the writer of the Gospel himself. Bruno Bauer (1841) who, like Reimarus, combined an in-

tense hatred of Christianity with great critical acumen, denied that any one had ever appeared in Palestine claiming to be the Messiah, and tried to make out that Jesus Christ was the creation of the reflective consciousness of the early Church (a favourite idea still with a certain class of critics), and that this consciousness found its best exponent in the Second Gospel, which he regarded as a work of art by a single writer. On the other hand, Keim had no doubt that "a kingdom of God clothed with material splendours" was an integral part of the theology of Jesus, while in the *Lives of Jesus* by Karl Hase, Beyschlag, and Bernard Weiss, there is a reconciliation of the two conflicting elements. Renan (1862), who treated the Gospels as legendary biographies, and took just so much from each as served his artistic and literary purposes, represented the death of Jesus as no part of His Messianic plan, but as forced on Him by circumstances, while Ghillany (1863), in his "Theological Letters to the Cultured Classes of the German Nation," argued that the sacrificial death which Jesus voluntarily incurred was intended by Him to secure the immediate advent of

His kingdom as the Messiah. According to Weiffenbach (1873), the resurrection of Jesus was His second coming, though this was not realized by His disciples.

In 1888 Baldensperger, a professor at Giesen, wrote a book to prove that while there was in the time of Jesus a fully formed Messianic expectation, derived from the Book of Daniel and the Similitudes of Enoch, Jesus Himself had a double consciousness and a double conception of the Kingdom of Heaven, one spiritual and the other apocalyptic, the former, however, being the primary and essential one. On the other hand, in 1892, Johannes Weiss undertook to show that with Jesus the Kingdom of God was wholly future and supramundane, His Messianic expectations being altogether transcendental and apocalyptic—a view which is also maintained by Schweitzer,¹ who finds in the eschatology of Jesus a key to His whole life and teaching, His soul being filled with a consciousness of His Messianic calling, not in a political but in a mystical

¹ For fuller information on the whole subject see Schweitzer's "Quest of the Historical Jesus" (Eng. tr., 1910).

sense. Wrede and Bousset have recently written on the other side, though from different standpoints. The researches of Dillmann, Hilgenfeld, Charles, and others, in the field of Jewish apocalyptic literature, have created, or accentuated, the problem rather than solved it. But while we may never be able to say with certainty how far Jesus shared the eschatological ideas of His countrymen, the records of His teaching to be found in the New Testament yield us the assurance that to Him were chiefly due the ethical qualities with which these ideas soon became associated in the Christian Church. These qualities were essential, not accidental. Whatever expectations our Saviour may have at any time entertained regarding the end of the present world, there is no trace in His teaching of a provisional morality, an *interimsethik*, as German writers call it. The principles He inculcated are independent of space and time. Because they involve a change of character, they are only to be realized in the world by slow degrees, but in their own nature they are fitted to meet the eternal wants of men, as moral and spiritual beings. In these circumstances, any difficulty

or uncertainty we may feel regarding our Saviour's utterances on the mysterious subject in question ought not to blind us to the matchless wisdom of His teaching, the unapproachable grandeur of His character, and the incalculable influence for good which the Christian religion has exerted, and is still exerting, on the condition of the human race.

Turning to the more purely critical aspect of the subject, we find that considerable progress has been recently made in determining the origin and date of the several Synoptics. To modern critics it has been the similarities in their language and arrangement, quite as much as the differences between them, that have seemed to call for explanation. For a long time after they began to receive attention, these similarities were supposed to be due to the Evangelists' dependence on one another; and the chief question debated was as to the relative priority of the Gospels. Some idea of the diversity of opinion on this subject may be formed from the fact that each of the following orders of sequence in the production of the Gospels has had its advocates among those who believed in their inter-dependence,—(1), (2),

and (3) receiving the largest support: (1) Matthew, Mark, Luke; (2) Matthew, Luke, Mark; (3) Mark, Matthew, Luke; (4) Mark, Luke, Matthew; (5) Luke, Matthew, Mark; (6) Luke, Mark, Matthew.

On the other hand, the literary independence of the Evangelists has been maintained by a certain school of critics who have found what they believe to be a sufficient explanation of the similarities in the supposition that the Gospel story, before being committed to writing, was circulated and handed down by means of oral repetition, which is still the common method of instruction in the East. This theory, propounded by Gieseler about a hundred years ago, has been strongly advocated in Germany by Wetzel and K. Veit, in Switzerland by Godet, in America by Norton, and in this country by Dean Alford, Bishop Westcott, Dr. Arthur Wright, and others. But while oral transmission may account for similarities within the compass of a single passage suitable for repetition, it could hardly have stereotyped the sequence of a series of passages in which there was no natural connexion between the events or the incidents

narrated, as is frequently the case in the Synoptic Gospels. Moreover, there is no evidence that such a uniform cycle of instruction, embracing certain incidents and discourses selected from the countless words and deeds of Christ, was ever authorized by the apostles. It is conceivable, indeed, that some of His discourses, and a recital of the great facts of redemption which centred in His birth, death, and resurrection, may have been prescribed to catechumens and evangelists to be committed to memory ; but when we have to account for the entire narrative common to the three Gospels, and the whole of Christ's recorded utterances, the theory of constant verbal repetition is very difficult to entertain. So far as we are acquainted with the preaching and teaching of the apostles and their coadjutors, it had nothing in common with a mechanical presentation of facts and doctrines, but was adapted on every occasion to the special wants and capacities of the hearers. We are not entitled to assume that in the primitive Christian Church, which had received a revelation that was not of the letter but of the spirit, and was to wait for more than a

generation before it had any thought of possessing a sacred volume of its own, there would be anything resembling the slavish and lifeless memorizing of the Koran by Mohammedan students. If there had been an elaborate course of lessons sanctioned by the apostles (and nothing else would have secured for the tradition anything like the uniformity we find in the Synoptics), it would very soon have been committed to writing for the guidance of those who had to impart the instruction; and, if it had emanated from Jerusalem (Luke 24⁴⁷), it would have been drawn up in Aramaic, the vernacular tongue, whereas nothing but the use of a common Greek tradition would account for the similarities which we find in the Synoptic Gospels.

All that we have now said is quite consistent with the fact that for some time after the death of Christ the truths of the Gospel, speaking generally, could only have existed in an oral form. "It is nowadays an accepted position that the oral tradition must be considered the ultimate basis of the entire Gospel" (Holtzmann). Nevertheless, for the reasons we have indicated, there has been a

growing conviction among critics for nearly half a century that behind our Gospels we must look for earlier documents on which they were founded.

As early as 1716 Le Clerc appears to have suggested the existence of such documents, and in 1750 we find the same idea broached by Michaelis. But the first to put forward a definite theory on the subject was Lessing (1778), who suggested that all the three Synoptics were derived from the Aramaic "Gospel of the Nazarenes" (the "Ur-evangelium"), of which Matthew may have made an abstract when he left Jerusalem to preach to the Hellenists, his example being followed by many others who translated the same Gospel to a greater or less extent into other languages. The idea was further developed by Eichhorn (1794), who held that the Synoptics were based on three different translations and expansions of an Aramaic Gospel, probably written by a disciple of one of the apostles about A.D. 35, and that the authors of the First and Third Gospels also made use of another work containing a record of some of Christ's discourses. The suspicion with which

such novel speculations were regarded was deepened by the fact that Eichhorn assigned to the canonical Gospels a very late date, somewhere about the end of the second century. The theory was wrought out in still more detail by Bishop Marsh, the translator of Michaelis, who convinced Eichhorn that a Greek original must be presupposed, to account for the verbal similarities in the Synoptics,—a point which has been emphasized by recent critics.

A new form of the theory was suggested by Schleiermacher (1817), to which the name of *Diegesen-theorie* was applied (from the Greek word translated “narrative” in Luke 1¹). Instead of one or two comprehensive but concise documents he suggested that there had probably been a number of separate leaflets scattered among the Churches, as it was “more natural to imagine many circumstantial memorials of detached incidents than a single connected but scanty narrative.” The latter, however, is the kind of primitive Gospel at which E. A. Abbott and W. G. Rushbrooke have arrived, as the result of falling back on what they designate the “triple tradition,”

being the matter common to the three Gospels, expressed somewhat differently in each. The resultant corresponds much more closely to Mark than to either Matthew or Luke, but it is so defective that it cannot be regarded as a complete outline of the original Gospel.

A marked contrast to such a solution of the problem by the simple process of elimination is afforded by the intricate theory of H. Ewald, who thought he discovered the existence of nine different factors in his attempt to trace the Gospels to their original sources. A special form of the one-document theory is associated with the names of Prof. Marshall and Dr. Resch, who attribute the divergences in the several Gospels to the variety of the translations, by the several Evangelists, of the original Gospel, which, according to Prof. Marshall, was Aramaic, but, according to Dr. Resch, Hebrew. Many plausible illustrations of such variations have been adduced, but the theory has not been confirmed by fuller investigations, and few believe that it is an adequate explanation of the phenomena that have to be accounted for.

One of the chief questions discussed by

modern critics in connexion with the Synoptic problem has been as to whether Matthew or Mark is more nearly related to the original Gospel. The trend of opinion for nearly a century has been in favour of Mark. This is a reversal of the opinion held by Baur, the founder of the Tübingen school, and by his immediate followers. Like Griesbach, they put Matthew first, holding it to be the exponent of the Palestinian or Petrine type of early Christianity, with which they supposed the original edition of Luke to have been in conflict as the representative of Paulinism; while they regarded Mark as a compilation, of a neutral character, from the two other Gospels. Starting with the idea that they could explain the relations of the Gospels as "something which grew up naturally, the working out of a principle of inner development," Baur and his followers were led by their love of philosophical hypotheses, founded on what they conceived to be the motives and movements in the early Church, to disregard the testimony of tradition in judging of the date and authorship of the canonical writings, and the consequence has been that most of their

negative conclusions have had to be modified or abandoned by their successors. Nowhere has this been more signally the case than in their criticism of the Gospels, which is generally acknowledged to have proceeded on a wrong principle, and to have led to very erroneous results, the dates now generally assigned to the Gospels being more than half a century earlier than those which they advocated.

It has only been after the most careful consideration of early patristic testimony and the most thorough examination of the text of Scripture, that the "two documents theory" has been generally adopted by scholars and critics both at home and abroad. Among early writers on the subject C. H. Weisse (1838) made the nearest approach to the modern form of the theory, which traces the Synoptics to two principal sources, one a document substantially identical with our Mark, the other a collection of our Lord's sayings, made by Matthew and composed originally in Aramaic. More recently the theory has owed much to the advocacy of H. J. Holtzmann and B. Weiss in Germany, and of Dr. Sanday in this country.

Before explaining the theory in detail it may be well to quote the early testimonies which have come down to us regarding the part taken by Matthew and Mark in recording the Saviour's life and teaching, and also to state a little more in detail the internal relations of the Synoptic Gospels to one another, which the theory is meant to account for.

The chief witness both as regards Matthew and Mark is Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis (*c.* 135) and author of an "Exposition of the Lord's Oracles."

(1) With reference to Matthew Eusebius quotes a statement of Papias in the following terms:—

"Matthew compiled the Oracles (or Discourses)¹ in the Hebrew dialect, and each

¹ τὰ Λόγια. There has been much controversy as to the meaning of this expression. Whatever be its lexical possibilities there has been a growing feeling that Schleiermacher was right in holding that Papias was not referring to the whole Gospel of Matthew, as known to us, but to a collection of the sayings of Jesus. Recently it has been suggested by Prof. Burkitt that the reference may be to a collection of Messianic proof-texts, gathered from the Old Testament, which occur so frequently in the First Gospel, and the suggestion is accepted by Prof. Lake and Prof. Gwatkin. But the series of sayings discovered at Oxy-

interpreted them as he was able ” (H. E., III, 39). This is confirmed by Irenæus (III, 1), who adds that Matthew published the Gospel among the Jews “ while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome and founding the Church there.” Eusebius states that Matthew wrote it when he was about to leave the Jews and preach also to other nations, in order to “ fill up the void about to be made by his departure ” (H. E., III, 24); and he also quotes Origen as stating that the Gospel was written by Matthew and delivered in Hebrew to the Jewish Christians (VI, 25).

(2) Regarding Mark the statement of Papias as quoted by Eusebius is as follows: “ This also the elder (John) used to say: Mark having become Peter’s interpreter wrote accurately whatever things he remembered that were either said or done by Christ; but not in order.¹ For he neither heard the Lord

rhynchus are an illustration of the former class of literature, though the modern editor of these sayings had no special authority for applying to them the title of *Logia*.

¹ ἐν τάξει. The meaning of this expression, in a technical or literary (as distinguished from a chronological) sense, is brought out by F. H. Colson in an article in “The Journal of Theological Studies” for October, 1912. Ac-

nor followed Him ; but subsequently, as I said, attached himself to Peter, who used to frame his teaching to meet the wants of his hearers, but not as making a connected narrative of the Lord's oracles. So Mark committed no error in thus writing down particulars just as he remembered them ; for he took heed to one thing, to omit none of the things that he had heard, and to state nothing falsely in his account of them " (H. E., III, 39). This account receives confirmation from Irenæus, who tells us (III, 1) that what Peter had preached was handed down in written form by Mark at Rome after the death of Peter and Paul ; from Tertullian, who speaks of the Gospel as Petrine ; and also from Clement of Alexandria, who affirms, on the tradition of a long line of presbyters, that Mark wrote at the request of Peter's hearers at Rome, without any interference on the part of Peter himself (Eus., H. E., VI, 14).

According to Mr. Colson, Mark's want of *taxis*, as compared with Matthew, is seen in his abrupt beginning, his defective ending, his emphasizing of trivial points and occasionally dealing inadequately with important ones, his comparatively rare introduction of set speeches, and his inferior grouping.

As regards the mutual relations of the Synoptics, if we leave out of account the two opening chapters of Matthew and Luke (where each Gospel gives an independent account of the birth and early life of Jesus), and part of the closing chapter in each case, we find (1) that these two Gospels coincide largely with Mark both as regards the selection of incidents, and the order in which they are recorded. This is the case even when there is an infringement of the natural order, as in Matthew 14¹, Mark 6¹⁴, Luke 9⁷, and also where there is a hiatus in the narrative. When Matthew and Luke diverge from the order of Mark, they rarely agree with one another. In other words, it is Mark's order that generally prevails. As regards diction, Matthew and Luke bear a close resemblance to Mark in the passages which they contain in common with it, identical phrases being of frequent occurrence in the three Gospels, and the resemblance extending even to the use of such a parenthetical clause as we find in Matthew 9⁶, Mark 2¹⁰, and Luke 5²⁴. In parallel passages Matthew and Luke occasionally coincide with one another in expression (and even in minute

points of order), in opposition to Mark ; but, as a rule, in expression (as in order) they agree with Mark far more than with one another. With all their similarities, however, the three Gospels exhibit many striking divergencies.

(2) In addition to the general narrative in which they coincide with Mark's Gospel (forming what is called the "triple tradition"), Matthew and Luke have a good deal of other matter in common with each other (the "double tradition"), consisting chiefly of sayings and discourses of Christ,¹ and in such cases they exhibit a closer verbal similarity to each other, amid occasional divergence, than is found anywhere else.

(3) While Mark contains very little that is not found in Matthew or Luke,² each of the two latter Gospels has a considerable amount

¹ Massed together in Matthew's Gospel in five different sections (chaps. 5-7, 10, 13, 18, 23-25), followed in each case by a closing formula (7²⁸, 11¹, 13⁵³, 19¹ and 26¹) ; but appearing in Luke in the form of numerous fragments, more or less condensed, at many different points in the narrative.

² Virtually confined to Mark 4²⁶⁻²⁹, 7³¹⁻³⁷, and 8²²⁻²⁶, though some other items peculiar to Mark are to be found in 8^{17 f.} ; 9³³ ; 14^{51 f., 65} ; 15⁴⁴.

of matter peculiar to itself, in addition to the introductory and closing passages already mentioned, which are outside the range of Mark's Gospel.¹

The conclusions now generally accepted, and the points on which there is still a difference of opinion, may be summarized as follows :—

(1) The Gospel of Mark, in all probability derived from Mark's notes or reminiscences of Peter's preaching, is substantially the oldest of our canonical Gospels ; and to it the authors of the First and Third Gospels were mainly indebted for their common outline of Christ's ministry, as well as for their detailed accounts of many individual incidents. The only alternative to this view is to suppose that the striking similarities between the three Gospels were due to extensive borrowing by Mark both from Matthew and Luke ; but in that case the Second Gospel could not have been the simple, direct, forcible composition that it is, and its language would not have been of so rude and primitive a character.

¹ It has to be kept in view that the last twelve verses of the canonical Gospel of Mark formed no part of the original text.

(2) In the compilation of our First and Third Gospels another document was used, to which critics have given the name "Q" (from the German *Quelle* = Source), consisting chiefly of sayings of Christ. While it is agreed that the author of the First Gospel used this document directly, some think that Luke may have been indebted to it only indirectly, through the medium of other documents with similar contents (cf. Luke 1¹ ff.). There is general agreement that the writing in question was the work of the Apostle Matthew, composed in Hebrew (Aramaic), as stated by Papias, but there are features in the language of our Gospels which show that this document must have been translated into Greek, before it was used in their compilation. As it was originally the work of Matthew, his name was naturally given to the Gospel in which the discourses of Jesus held the most prominent place, especially as such a designation could not be given to the Gospel of Luke which was known to be published under different auspices. It is generally felt, however, that the First Gospel, as it stands, cannot be the work of Matthew (whatever Papias may have thought),

both because it cannot be regarded as a translation, and because it is extremely improbable that one who was an apostle, as Matthew was, and had been an eye-witness of Christ's ministry, would have taken his information at second-hand from one who, like Mark, had not been a personal disciple of Jesus. It is generally believed that Q included all that is contained both in Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, and that it may also have been the source of some things that are found in Matthew or in Luke alone. It is supposed to have had some introductory and connective matter, with an account of the Baptism, the Temptation, and the healing of the centurion's servant, but not to have had an account of Christ's death and resurrection.¹ Whether it is better represented in Matthew or in Luke is a matter of controversy. If the beautiful parables peculiar to Luke were derived from Q, it is strange that the author of the First Gospel did not appropriate more of its teaching. On the whole, the probability seems to be that in the Messianic teaching of

¹ According to Harnack; but Burkitt thinks Luke's account of the Passion may be traced to it.

the First Gospel we have the fullest representation of the contents of Matthew's work,¹ while Luke seems to have broken it up into fragments, making use only of such portions of it as he could insert at a suitable place, in accordance with the general design stated in his preface. But in the opinion of Burkitt and Holtzmann, Q is more faithfully represented in Luke.

(3) Besides making use of Q and the Gospel of Mark, both Luke and (to a less degree) the author of the First Gospel must have been indebted to other sources, oral or written, for things peculiar to their Gospels in substance or expression (including some of the finest speci-

¹ Sir J. C. Hawkins (H.S., p. 132) points out the analogy between the five sections in Matthew, and various five-fold arrangements in Jewish literature, and says: "It is hard to believe that it is by accident that we find in St. Matthew the *five* times repeated formula about Jesus 'ending' his sayings (7²⁸; 11¹; 12⁵³; 19¹; 26¹)."

When we add to this that Papias wrote an "Exposition of the Lord's Oracles (or Discourses)" in five Books, we see that there is considerable reason for the view of W. W. Holdsworth and others, that in the five sections of the First Gospel, we have the very arrangement of the discourses which was attributed to Matthew by Papias (*συνετάξατο* or *συνεγράψατο*).

mens of our Lord's teaching in Luke), and for information in both Gospels regarding the birth and infancy of Jesus (where the style of composition is of a very archaic character, especially in Luke), and concerning the resurrection of Jesus.

(4) The coincidences between Matthew and Luke, where they differ from Mark in the triple tradition, have given rise to the idea that they may have had in their hands another form of Mark than that which we possess. With some (Baur, Schleiermacher, Renan, Davidson, Salmon, Holtzmann, Wendt) this *Ur-Markus*, as it is called, means something very different from our Second Gospel, whether larger or smaller; but others (e.g. Sanday and Schmiedel) are of opinion that the change which took place was slight and superficial, a mere revision sufficient to account for the coincidences referred to, if we bear in mind the tendency to assimilation in the process of transmission.¹ According to Holdsworth, Mark brought out three different editions of his Gospel, one in

¹ Although Wellhausen believes in an *Ur-Markus*, he thinks that the authors of our Matthew and Luke used the Gospel of Mark in its present form—an opinion shared by Wernle, Jülicher, Burkitt, and Loisy.

Palestine, another in Egypt (for Jewish Christians) and another in Rome (for Gentiles),—the first of these being embodied in Luke and the second in Matthew, while the third forms our canonical Mark. He holds that on this theory the problem may be solved without supposing Q to have contained anything but the words spoken by our Lord as a Divine Teacher, which might be fitly called “oracles.” Others get over the difficulty by supposing that Luke was acquainted with our Gospel of Matthew (Holtzmann, Weizsäcker, Wendt, Halévy, Soltau, Allen, Jülicher), or that Mark (as well as the authors of Matthew and Luke) was acquainted with Q (B. Weiss, Jülicher, von Soden, Bousset, Barth, Loisy, Bacon, Adeney).¹

(5) Q is generally regarded as the oldest Gospel record of which we have any knowledge. The words of Christ would naturally be committed to writing before the facts of His history, as the latter for a considerable time

¹ Those who take this view, account for the sparing use which Mark made of Q, by the fact that he did not wish his work to compete with Q, which was already the acknowledged authority with reference to our Lord's utterances.

would be sufficiently attested by the personal statements of those who had been eye-witnesses of His ministry.

With regard to the authorship, date, and character of the several Synoptic Gospels, the following are the conclusions which seem to be best supported and most generally accepted.

(1) While there is some difference of opinion as to the history of the Gospel of Mark, before it assumed its present form, there is now general agreement that it is the earliest of the Gospels that have come down to us. Not many critics put it later than A.D. 70, and according to Harnack it must have been written by Mark during the sixth decade of the first century at the latest. Its early date is proved partly by the fact that it lies at the foundation of Matthew and Luke, and partly by its general style and diction and its freedom from any signs of ecclesiastical policy or doctrinal bias. There is only one long discourse in the book (chap. 13). It has reference to the great event to which the early Christians looked forward with intense longing for many years, namely, the return of their Lord from heaven, and some critics are inclined to think that it may have had a circulation, in a separate

form, before being incorporated in the Gospel. A number of critics, such as Wendling and Bacon, have attempted to deal with the book as some of the Old Testament writings have been dealt with, by tracing it to earlier literary sources. But the attempts have not been attended with much success, and it may be questioned whether any reliable results will ever be attained by such abstruse speculations, in which conjecture has to play so great a part. As a whole, the Gospel has a unity about it which proves its originality, and, in spite of its defects from a literary or artistic point of view, it gives the reader a wonderfully good idea of the gradual development of the Saviour's ministry and of the progressive course of events which led to the tragic *dénouement* in the crucifixion. As Dr. Burkitt says: "In St. Mark we are appreciably nearer to the actual scenes of our Lord's life, to the course of events, than in any other document which tells us of Him." Similar testimony, from a different point of view, is borne by Prof. Swete, when he says; "The freshness of its colouring, the simplicity of its teaching, the absence of any indication that Jerusalem had already fallen when it was

written, seem to point to a date earlier than the summer of A.D. 70.”¹

According to a very early tradition, the author derived his information very largely from statements made by Peter in the course of his preaching, and many parts of the narrative bear the marks of being derived from an eye-witness, having reference, in some cases, to Peter's personal experience. A number of things favourable to the Apostle, which are found in other Gospels, are here conspicuous by their absence, but he holds a prominent place in the narrative, being the first person mentioned after the opening of the Ministry, and being recognized throughout as the leader of the Twelve. There can be no doubt that the success of the book, and the place of honour given to it as one of the four canonical Gospels, was owing to the association of

¹ Clement of Alexandria tells us that it was written while Peter was still alive, but until recently this statement was supposed to be at variance with the testimony of Irenæus. Dom J. Chapman, however, has shown that this is a misunderstanding of Irenæus's words. There is so much uncertainty about the date of Peter's death, and also of Paul's, that Clement's statement does not help us much, and it is probably better to be content with an approximate date, before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Peter's name with that of its author. Mark himself was in no sense a leader in the Church,¹ and his reputation was somewhat sullied by what is recorded of him in Acts 13¹³ (cf. 15³⁷⁻³⁹ and Col. 4¹⁰). There is no reason to doubt the identity of this John Mark with the Mark who is referred to in the Epistles at a later time as a friend both of Peter and of Paul. A comparison of the relative passages is sufficient to prove this. As a Jew who had Hellenistic relatives (Acts 4³⁶; cf. Col. 4¹⁰), and had travelled in Asia Minor and elsewhere (Acts 13 f.), but was apparently a native of Jerusalem (12^{12,25}), Mark was well fitted to be Peter's interpreter. Although Peter no doubt preached in Aramaic, there is no reason to believe that Mark wrote his Gospel in that language (Blass and Allen). The occasional use of Aramaic expressions, in the form of transliterations, is sufficiently accounted for by the fact that Aramaic was Mark's mother-tongue. That he wrote for the

¹ The nature of his service to the Church may be inferred from Acts 13⁵, where he is described as Paul and Barnabas's "minister" (R.V. "attendant"), as well as from Paul's commendation of him at a later period as "useful to me for ministering" (II Tim. 4¹¹, R.V.).

benefit of Gentile Christians is evident not only from the fact that he translates such expressions for the reader, but also from his explaining Jewish customs and beliefs, and from the paucity of his allusions to the Old Testament. His frequent use of Latin words and idioms confirms the tradition that he was writing in Rome, where we find him ministering to Paul's comfort (Col. 4¹¹; cf. Philemon, v. 24) and associated, at another time, with Peter (I Pet. 5¹³—"Babylon" being here probably a metaphorical name for Rome). An argument in favour of this view will also be found on a careful comparison of Mark 15²¹ and Romans 16¹³.

We find traces in patristic writings of an early and widely received tradition that Mark ultimately went to Egypt and founded the catechetical school of Alexandria, where he is said to have died a martyr's death. But neither Clement nor Origen makes any mention of this.

(2) In the case of our First Gospel the tendency of recent criticism has been to follow tradition only so far as to admit that most of our Lord's discourses which it contains came from the pen of Matthew, one of the Twelve,

who was previously known as Levi the publican. At some time previous to the composition of this Gospel, a collection of such discourses, Papias tells us, had been drawn up by Matthew in Hebrew, or rather in Aramaic. This work no longer exists as a separate document, but it is largely, if not entirely, represented in our First Gospel, and also to some extent, directly or indirectly, in the Gospel of Luke. According to Harnack it may be assigned to the year 50 or even earlier,¹ but Sir William Ramsay holds it to have been written while Christ was still living. "It gives us the view" (he says) "which one of His disciples entertained of Him and His teaching during His life-time." Numberless attempts have been made to define its limits and determine its contents. Harnack thinks that it stopped short of the Last Week of the ministry, and did not include the Last Supper or the Passion and the Resurrection; while Archdeacon Allen holds that it consisted of all the teaching of Christ to be found in Matthew, except what is also found in Mark.

¹ According to Dr. Moffatt, it "reflects the faith and mission and sufferings of the primitive Jewish Christian Church of Palestine, long before the crisis of 70 A.D. began to loom on the horizon" (I.L.N.T., p. 203).

In any of its possible forms, however, the lost source seems to have claimed for Jesus a unique position in the Kingdom of God, representing Him as the perfect Revealer of the Father, the supreme Teacher, and the final Judge.

The association of Matthew's name with the Gospel is best accounted for by supposing him to have been the author of this document. After his conversion and call, his name is never mentioned, except as one of the disciples who were present in the upper room on the day of the Ascension, and he did not attach himself to Jesus till some time after the Galilæan ministry had begun. In these circumstances, it is extremely improbable that he should have been credited with the authorship of what has been called "the most important book in Christendom, the most important book that ever was written," unless he had had a considerable share in its production.¹ On the other hand, it is worthy of notice that although he held so insignificant a place among the apostles, he was perhaps better

¹ The only passages of the New Testament in which Matthew is referred to are Matthew 9⁹ f., 10³; Mark 2¹⁴ f., 3¹⁸; Luke 5²⁷⁻²⁹, 6¹⁵; Acts 1¹³.

fitted for the work of a recorder than any of his colleagues, owing to the duties of the calling in which he had been engaged before he became a disciple.

Who it was that composed the Gospel in its present form it is impossible to say. In all probability he was a Hellenistic Jew with a wide outlook, concerned, above everything, with the vindication of the claims of Jesus as the Messiah in whom the Old Testament promises had been abundantly fulfilled,¹ and maintaining the essential validity of the Law of Moses; yet combining with these views a full appreciation of the heart-searching teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, and a strong aversion to the religious pretensions of the Pharisees. Burkitt describes him as "so to speak, a Christian Rabbi," who adapted the teaching of Jesus to the wants of the Christian Church about 90-100 A.D. But Archdeacon Allen thinks that it is just such a Gospel as might have been drawn up at Antioch, about the year 50, by an earnest Jewish Christian

¹ To prove this he cites no fewer than sixty Old Testament prophecies. His Jewish sympathies are shown by his use of the Old Testament in the Hebrew, not in the Septuagint, in the quotations peculiar to his Gospel.

who believed that Gentiles were only to be admitted to the Kingdom of Heaven on condition of obedience to the Law, and who was looking for a speedy return of the Saviour to begin His reign upon the earth. Comparatively few critics, however, date the Gospel before 70,¹ although there is no conclusive evidence for a later date. If the destruction of Jerusalem had already taken place, it is strange that the writer should still associate that calamity with the end of the world—so closely, indeed, that it is scarcely possible to distinguish between them (chap. 24). The baptismal formula (28^{19 f.}) is alleged to bear the stamp of a later period, but the doctrine of the Trinity is equally involved in the benediction at the close of II Corinthians; while the reference to the Church in chap. 16^{18 f.} has many parallels in the Epistles of Paul, as well as in Acts 7³⁸ and 20²⁸, and is quite in harmony with the ecclesiastical conceptions of the Jews. The majority of critics favour a date between 70 and 90, and some (Schmiedel and Pfeiderer) put it as late as 130 or 140. Harnack in his

¹ Among them are Bleek, Meyer, Keim, Godet, Jacquier, Adeney, and Bartlet.

“Date of the Acts and the Synoptic Gospels” adheres to his former position and says: “I could sooner convince myself that Matthew was written before the destruction of Jerusalem than believe that one decade elapsed after the catastrophe before the book was written.”

Whatever the date and authorship of the Gospel may have been, it soon gained a far stronger hold on the affections of the Church at large, notwithstanding its Jewish colouring, and was far more frequently quoted by early patristic writers, than any of the other Gospels. This was no doubt partly owing to the fact that it combined narrative and discourse so well, and gave such a full account of our Lord's death and resurrection, partly also, perhaps, owing to its being generally regarded as the earliest of the Gospels. Its popularity must have had the effect of throwing the original Matthæan document into the shade, the consequence being, apparently, that it soon disappeared and was superseded in Ebionite circles by the Gospel of the Nazarenes.¹

¹ The Gospel of Mark seems to have suffered from the same cause, being comparatively little quoted by the Fathers

(3) Fifty years ago it was the fashion to deny the genuineness of the Third Gospel and of Acts as the works of Luke, and to regard them as productions of the second century. But there is a growing body of critical opinion in favour of the Lucan authorship of both, and with many scholars the chief question now is as to the dates of their composition. A majority, including even such conservative critics as Zahn, B. Weiss, Sanday, and Plummer, hold the Gospel to have been written after A.D. 70, basing their opinion mainly on the more definite form which Luke gives to our Lord's prediction regarding the destruction of Jerusalem, in chaps. 19⁴¹⁻⁴⁴ and 21²⁰⁻²⁴, where he substitutes the description of a besieged city for "the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place," or "standing where he ought not," which we find in the other Synoptics (Matt. 24¹⁵, Mark 13¹⁴, R.V.; cf. Dan. 9²⁷). Wellhausen and others hold that we have evidently here (in Luke) a *vaticinium post eventum*; but Harnack maintains that this is not so, pointing out that Luke's description of and made the subject of a Commentary apparently for the first time (by Victor of Antioch) in the fifth or sixth century.

the catastrophe is after all a very natural and obvious one. Neither does he see any evidence of a later date in the opening statement of the Gospel as to the many accounts of the Christian faith which had been already drawn up, and his verdict is that "it seems now to be established beyond question that both books of this great historical work were written while St. Paul was still alive." In support of this view he cites the names of Hofmann, Thiersch, Wieseler, Resch, and Blass, to which we may add those of Guericke, Alford, Schaff, Gloag, Salmon, Jacquier, and Koch. According to Harnack, the Gospel must have been written at the very beginning of the seventh decade, as it preceded Acts, which he holds to have been written in A.D. 62.

It is strongly in favour of the Lucan authorship of this Gospel that it was used by Marcion before the middle of the second century, and it is difficult to understand how Luke's name should ever have been given to it, unless he was in some sense the author of it. The traces of a medical habit of thought and expression, which may be discerned here and there, are also in favour of its being the work of "the be-

loved physician¹ ;” but as regards the evidence as a whole we may refer to our chapter dealing with Acts, as the two books must stand or fall together.

While there is in Luke more of an attempt at a historical arrangement of Q than in Matthew, there is also a stronger tendency to tone down expressions found in Mark which might seem to be at variance with the reverence due to Christ, and the respect due to His apostles. But there is nothing inconsistent with the writer’s purpose as stated in the preface, namely, to supply Theophilus, (apparently a man of rank), to whom the book is dedicated, with trustworthy information regarding the rise and spread of Christianity. It is the work of a historian, and exhibits signs of independence which refute the Tübingen notion that the author was a strong Paulinist.² His tendency to universalism, however, is often visible, and comes out in the Saviour’s genealogy, which he traces back to “Adam the (son) of God.”

¹ Colossians 4¹⁴. The only other passages in which Luke is mentioned are II Timothy 4¹¹ and Philemon v. 24.

² “One of the most assured results of recent research is that he was not a Paulinist masquerading as a historian” (Dr. Moffatt).

Luke had no doubt consulted other written sources besides Mark and the "Logia," and it is not unlikely that he derived information from Philip of Cæsarea and his daughters during Paul's imprisonment in that city, and perhaps also from the mother of our Lord. According to Dr. Burkitt, Luke's writings are characterized by "a tendency towards voluntary poverty and a tendency towards asceticism," which appear not only in his choice of material for his Gospel, but also in his literal representation of Christ's words of consolation for the poor (e.g. cf. Matt. 5^{3,6} and Luke 6^{20 ff.}). His work is so comprehensive that, although it embodies three-fourths of the Gospel of Mark, nearly half of its contents is peculiar to itself. The greater part of this is found in the account of our Lord's last journey to Jerusalem (chaps. 9⁵¹-18¹⁴), and it has been suggested, as a possible explanation of its absence from Mark's Gospel, that, during most of the time referred to, Peter may have been travelling through Peræa, while Jesus was passing through Samaria (Luke⁵¹⁻⁵⁶), till they met in "the borders of Judæa" (Mark 10¹).

It will thus be seen that in view of its

results we have no reason to regret the attempt which was made in the course of last century to bring down our Gospels to a comparatively late date, since it has been the means of stimulating the defenders of the faith to set forth the evidence in their favour in full force, and thus reinstate them in the confidence of the Church. Few will dispute the very moderate assertion recently made by Prof. Menzies that "there can be little doubt that the sources of the Synoptic Gospels existed a decade or two before A.D. 70." This leaves negative critics with the difficult task of accounting for the rise of the Gospels in the course of a generation after Christ's death, without admitting the essential truth of the story embodied in them, on which the faith of the Church was founded.

It was said by Strauss, whose "Life of Jesus" caused such a commotion in the Christian world seventy or eighty years ago, that "it would most unquestionably be an argument of decisive weight for the credibility of the biblical history, could it indeed be shown that it was written by eye-witnesses or even by persons nearly contemporaneous with the events narrated" (I. p. 55, E.T.). But the

accumulation of evidence for the early date of the Gospels has produced no appreciable effect on the attitude of the critics to whom we have referred.¹ It is vain to expect that any amount of evidence in the sphere of criticism should ever prove an effectual remedy for unbelief based on the repudiation of the supernatural. The presence of that element in the Gospel creates in some minds as strong a prejudice against the acceptance of the evangelic narrative in its integrity, as the old prepossession in its favour, which arose from the doctrine of verbal inspiration. Owing to the ascendancy of physical science, a new dogma of incredibility has taken the place of the old theory of infallibility—in spite

¹ For example, Pfleiderer, while admitting that our Second Gospel was the work of Mark, was unable to believe that he had derived his information from Peter, as he held it to be impossible that the Apostle, having been an eye-witness of Christ's ministry, could have any miracles to relate. In a similar spirit, even Weizsäcker regarded it as decisive against the traditional claim of the Fourth Gospel, that it involves a belief that a primitive apostle, familiar with Jesus, "should have come to regard and represent his whole former experience as a life with the incarnate Logos of God."

of the fact that some of the greatest authorities, both in science and philosophy, admit that there is no *a priori* impossibility in miracles, and that our relation to Nature is beset with mystery. If it be true that the churchman is eager to avail himself of every possible support for the faith once for all delivered to the saints, it is equally true that those who abjure the supernatural are constantly under temptation to invent some theory of fabrication, or interpolation, or legend, which may undermine the historical character of such statements as they cannot accept. And whereas there is no need for the Christian apologist to vindicate all the miracles recorded in the New Testament (Christ's resurrection alone being a sufficient guarantee of the truth of Christianity), any more than to prove the genuineness and authenticity of every book in the New Testament, the opponent of the supernatural, on the other hand, is bound to get rid of the miraculous in every form, no matter in what part of the Scriptures it may make its appearance.

It might have been thought that, as the criticism of the Gospels affects the foundation of the faith and touches the heart of our re-

ligion, Christian writers would have been slow to propagate opinions of a speculative character, that are fatal not only to the Divine claims but even to the historical reality of the Saviour. But the spirit of doubt, when once aroused, sometimes gains a strange ascendancy over some minds, and imparts a fascination to views of a revolutionary character. Hence we have recently had the painful spectacle of ministers of the Gospel viewing with complacency the surrender of their faith not only in the Divinity but even in the very humanity of their Lord, and proclaiming to the world their readiness to treat as a fable the sacred life which has been the object of the Church's faith for nineteen centuries. One can imagine the indignation with which such conduct would have been denounced by the apostles. But in these days when faith is weak, and criticism bold, such utterances do not cause much astonishment, being only aggravated instances of a destructive tendency that is widely prevalent. As an illustration of the length to which criticism will sometimes go, we may quote the following instance, mentioned in the "Expository Times" of October, 1910. In an

American magazine called "The Open Court" a discussion, which lasted for more than a year, was begun by an article from the pen of the editor of the "Polychrome Bible," to prove that Jesus, having been born, not in Bethlehem, but in Nazareth of Galilee, at a time when the inhabitants of Galilee were mostly Medians, was probably a Median, and thus belonged to the Aryan race. By and by an editorial appeared in the same magazine disputing the assumption that Jesus was born in Nazareth, on the ground that there was no such town or village at the time in question, and explaining away the tradition by supposing the Nazarenes to have been a mistake for Nazirites, the probability being that he was born in Capernaum. Then another professor entered the field to prove that Jesus was not born at all, that the name "Jesus" was only a title, a Hebrew form of the Greek *Soter* (Saviour), under which the Jews found Zeus or Jupiter worshipped by the Greeks. This did not end the controversy, however, for yet another critic came forward to maintain that Jesus was no other than Buddha himself, clothed in Jewish Messianic apparel.

In order to resolve the personality of Jesus into a myth, all sorts of theories have been advanced, based partly on natural phenomena, partly on national or racial legends. So serious is the view some take of the mischievous results which may arise from the circulation of such literature, that a number of books have been written for the very purpose of counteracting its influence and exposing the hollowness of its reasoning.¹

Even more dangerous, perhaps, because more subtle, than such fantastic vagaries of avowed unbelief is the tendency of some critical writers within the pale of the Church to represent the character and life of Jesus depicted in the Gospels, as due to the reflective consciousness of a subsequent age, without whose imagination the portrait could never have been painted. Did Jesus Christ create the Church or did the Church create Him? is a fundamental question, which can only be answered in one way by those who believe

¹ Such are "Jesus the Christ: Historical or Mythical?" by T. J. Thorburn, D.D., LL.D.; "The Historicity of Jesus," by S. J. Case, Chicago; "Der Geschichtliche Jesus," by Prof. Clemen of Bonn; "The Truth about Jesus," by Dr. Friedrich Loofs of Oberlin, U.S.A.

Him to be a living, personal Saviour. If the Gospel records be true, Jesus was the original fountain of inspiration to His Church. The heights of aspiration and achievement which were reached by the Apostles and their converts, were not the result of a gradual idealising of the Saviour's figure after His departure, but were due to the fuller realisation of the meaning and purpose of words and deeds which were to a large extent beyond the comprehension of His followers at the time of their occurrence. In other words, the early Church was not mistaken when it worshipped Jesus as Divine, and recognized Him to be "the author and perfecter of (their) faith."

This chapter may be fitly closed with the testimony of two of the greatest scholars and most acute critics of our time, Prof. Harnack of the University of Berlin, and the late Dr. Salmon, head of Trinity College, Dublin.

"Our knowledge of the history and the teaching of our Lord," says Prof. Harnack, "in their main features at least, depends upon two authorities independent of one another, yet composed at nearly the same time. Where

they agree their testimony is strong, and they do agree often and on important points. On the rock of their united testimony the assault of destructive critical views, however necessary these are to easily self-satisfied research, will ever be shattered to pieces" ("The Sayings of Jesus," p. 249).

The testimony of Dr. Salmon is no less emphatic. "The more I study the Gospels, the more convinced I am that we have in them contemporaneous history; that is to say, that we have in them the stories told of Jesus immediately after His death, and which had been circulated, and, as I am disposed to believe, put in writing, while He was yet alive. . . . I cannot doubt that these writings present us with the story as told in the very first assemblies of Christians, by men who had been personal disciples of Jesus; nor do I think that the account of any of our Lord's miracles would have been very different if we could have the report of it as published in a Jerusalem newspaper next morning" ("The Human Element in the Gospels," pp. 8 and 274).

CHAPTER IV

THE JOHANNINE WRITINGS

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO S. JOHN

THERE are five books in the New Testament attributed to the Apostle John, namely, the Fourth Gospel, the three Epistles which bear his name, and the book of "The Revelation." Of these the Gospel is the most important; in the general estimation it is the most precious of all the books in the New Testament. Augustine said long ago: "John, the apostle, not unworthily compared to the eagle in respect of spiritual intelligence, hath taken a higher flight and soared in his preaching much more sublimely than the other three, and in the lifting up thereof would have our hearts lifted up too." Luther pronounced it "the one tender right chief Gospel and infinitely preferable to the other three." The late Dr. Dale has told how it went right to the heart of a Japanese reader: "The vision which

came to him while reading John's account of our Lord's life and teaching was a vision from another and diviner world ; he fell at the feet of Christ exclaiming, ' My Lord and my God.' ” A modern German critic says : “ Who would not confess that in his sweet, unearthly picture this evangelist has given us the true religious import of the sacred life ? ”

The writer last quoted does not believe the book to have been written by John and cannot accept it as historical. He is one of many critics who hold that the value of the book is independent of its authorship and of the historical truth of its contents. This might be a tenable position if the Gospel made no claim to be historical and merely presented us with an ideal picture. But it is different when the writer expressly claims to have been an eye-witness of the ministry of Jesus. He says : “ The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth ” (1¹⁴). In the beginning of the First Epistle (which is generally admitted to be from the same pen as the Gospel) he says : “ That which was from the beginning, that which we

have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also." In harmony with this is the statement in the last chapter of the Gospel, whether written by the Apostle or, as seems more probable, added by others: "This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true" (21²⁴). The context shows that the disciple here referred to is "the disciple whom Jesus loved," who appears in the Gospel under this name on four occasions—at the last supper, at the cross, at the empty tomb, and on the beach of the Sea of Galilee, when he was the first of a company of seven disciples to recognize the risen Lord (13²³; 19²⁶ f.; 20¹⁻¹⁰; 21⁷⁻²³).¹ The claims thus definitely made leave no room for a theory

¹ 19³⁵ also implies that the testimony in question was given by an eye-witness, but whether it is the writer that is referred to is open to question.

of pseudonymous authorship, in the sense of an innocent assumption of a great historic name. For the book is largely a narrative, and the assertion that the author speaks from personal knowledge is of vital importance, and could not have been made with a good conscience unless it had been well founded. The question of authorship, therefore, is of the greatest importance, and all the evidence on the subject ought to be carefully considered.

The first writer, so far as is known to us, who definitely quotes from this Gospel as the work of "John," is Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, who had been brought up as a pagan but was converted through the study of the Bible. In a defence of Christianity addressed to a pagan friend, Autolytus, about A.D. 180, he says: "The Holy Scriptures teach us, and all the inspired writers, one of whom, John, says, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God." In the "Muratorian Fragment," a little earlier, the Gospel is assigned to John, "a disciple of the Lord," and the following account of its origin is given: "At the entreaties of his fellow-disciples and his bishops, John said: Fast with me for three

days from this time, and whatsoever shall be revealed to each of us (whether it be favourable to my writing or not) let us relate it to one another. On the same night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the apostles, that John should relate all things in his own name, aided by the revision of all. . . . What wonder is it then that John so constantly brings forward Gospel phrases even in his epistles, saying in his own person, What we have seen with our eyes, and heard with our ears, and our hands have handled, these things have we written? For so he professes that he was not only an eye-witness, but also a hearer, and moreover a historian of all the wonderful works of the Lord.”

We have a most important witness in Irenæus, Bishop of Vienne and Lyons in Gaul, who was born and brought up in Asia Minor and had for his predecessor a man named Pothinus, who died as a martyr about A.D. 177, when he was ninety years of age. Irenæus had not the shadow of a doubt that the Fourth Gospel was the work of the Apostle John—regarding which, as he says, “all the disciples associated with John, the disciple of the Lord

in Asia, bear witness” ; and he tells how John lived in Ephesus till the time of Trajan. What makes the evidence of Irenæus particularly valuable is the fact that in his youth he had been brought into close personal contact with Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John, who was for about forty years Bishop of Smyrna (a few miles distant from Ephesus), and suffered martyrdom in his eighty-sixth year, about A.D. 155.

We have an interesting addition to this statement of Irenæus, in a reference by Tertullian of Carthage, a few years later, to the claim made by the Church at Smyrna that Polycarp had been appointed as their bishop by the Apostle John. Elsewhere Tertullian says : “ John and Matthew form the faith within us : among the companions of the Apostles Luke and Mark renovate it.” Another important witness of about the same time is Clement of Alexandria, a man of very wide reading and great scholarship. In a short treatise of his that has come down to us, entitled, “ Who is the rich man that shall be saved ? ” he mentions that “ after the tyrant’s death John returned from the isle of Patmos to Ephesus.” In

Eusebius's "Church History" we find a reproduction of a passage in a lost work of Clement's called "Outlines," giving an account of the traditions of the Elders regarding the order in which the four Gospels were written. This is what is said about the Fourth Gospel: "John, perceiving that what had reference to the body was clearly set forth in the other Gospels, and being encouraged by his familiar friends, and urged by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel."

The Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel and its singular worth were attested no less strongly by Origen, Clement's famous successor at Alexandria, who says: "We make bold to say that of all the Scriptures the Gospels are the firstfruits; and the firstfruits of the Gospels is that according to John, the meaning whereof none can apprehend who has not leaned upon the breast of Jesus, or received, at the hands of Jesus, Mary to be his mother too."

Eusebius represents the general tradition on the subject when he says: "The three Gospels previously written having come into general circulation and also having been handed to

John, they say that he admitted them, giving his testimony to their truth ; but alleging that there was wanting in the narration the account of the things done by Christ at the commencement of His ministry. And this was the truth ; for it is evident that the other three evangelists only wrote the deeds of our Lord for one year after the imprisonment of John the Baptist, and intimated this in the very beginning of their history. . . . One who understands this can no longer think that the Gospels are at variance with one another, inasmuch as the Gospel according to John contains the first acts of Christ, while the others give an account of the latter part of his life.”

There is only one discordant note in the testimony of the early Church on this subject. It appears from statements made by Hippolytus in his “Refutation of all Heresies,” and by Epiphanius, a writer in the fourth century, that in the latter part of the second century there were some people who rejected the Fourth Gospel, alleging that it was the work of a Gnostic, Cerinthus, although, strange to say, Irenæus tells us that it was the very object of the Gospel to refute the errors of this

Cerinthus, a purpose which it was well fitted to serve by the emphasis which it laid on the reality of the Incarnation. Epiphanius calls these rejectors of the Gospel *Alogi*, that is, deniers of the "Logos" or Word (the title given to Christ in the prologue), though perhaps he also meant the expression to be taken in another sense, as a name for people devoid of reason,—the same word in the singular neuter being applied, in modern Greek, to a beast of burden.

In opposition to the notion entertained by this obscure sect, of whom only one supporter can be named with any degree of probability, namely, Caius of Rome, we have to consider not only the weighty consensus of opinion above mentioned, but also evidence derived from still earlier writers, who appear to have been acquainted with the contents of the book. We find echoes of it in the writings of Ignatius, who seems to have known it almost by heart, and also, to some extent, in the "Didaché." It was used by several Gnostic writers who are quoted by Hippolytus and Irenæus, namely, Basilides (A.D. 125), Valentinus (145), and his friend and disciple Heracleon, who wrote a

commentary on it, from which it would appear to have already held an assured position in the Church. Eusebius tells us that Papias (*c.* 135), Bishop of Hierapolis, about eighty miles from Ephesus, quoted from the First Epistle of John as authoritative, which Polycarp also did. Justin Martyr (*c.* 155) appears in a number of passages to use language derived from this Gospel, and Tatian (*c.* 170) began his "Diatessaron," or Harmony of the Four Gospels, with its opening verse and drew largely from its contents. In the "Clementine Homilies," which are usually assigned to the latter part of the second century, Lagarde found fifteen quotations from this Gospel; and, according to Rendel Harris, the lately recovered "Gospel of Peter," which may also be dated in the second century, shows a considerable acquaintance with it. The testimony in its favour thus reaches back to the beginning of the second century, and it is therefore not surprising to find that in the fourth century it was included by Eusebius in the list of writings universally acknowledged to be canonical.

One of the first to question the authority of the book was the clergyman of the Church of

England already referred to in connection with the synoptics (p. 104). He regarded the Fourth Gospel as the work of a Christian Platonist of the second century. In 1820 a more formidable attack was made by Bretschneider in his "Probabilia." Since that time its genuineness and authenticity have been the subject of continual controversy. On the one side, favouring the traditional claims of the Gospel, but not excluding the possibility of John's having received assistance in the work, we may reckon Schleiermacher, Bleek, Godet, B. Weiss, Beyschlag, Zahn, Barth, Feine, Jacquier, Westcott, Lightfoot, Milligan, Dods, Salmon, Reynolds, Watkins, Sanday, Bernard, Swete, Stanton, Nicol, Drummond, Askwith. On the other side are ranged Baur, who regarded it as an ideal picture of the Christ, intended to meet the intellectual wants of the Church about 160-170 A.D. ; Keim, who held it to be a theological poem by a liberal Jewish Christian, probably one of the *Diaspora* in Asia Minor, in the reign of Trajan (110-117) ; Pfleiderer, who pronounced it "a transparent allegorization of religious and dogmatic conceptions," written somewhere between A.D. 135 and 150 ; Matthew

Arnold, who regarded the author as a sincere Christian, a man of literary talent and a theologian, a Greek, not a fisherman of Galilee; Thoma, who attributed the Gospel to a Jewish Christian of Alexandrian culture, living at Ephesus about 134; Jülicher, who suggests from 100 to 125, and considers that the one unassailable proposition is that the author (100-125) was not "the disciple whom Jesus loved"; Schmiedel, who holds that it was not written by the son of Zebedee, or by an eye-witness or contemporary, but by a later writer, probably after A.D. 132, under the influence of Alexandrian and Gnostic ideas; von Soden, who regards it as the work (A.D. 110) of a devoted adherent of the beloved disciple, who was the "Elder" of Ephesus, but not the son of Zebedee. To these we may add Hausrath, Scholten, Grill, Wernle, Wrede, Scott, Réville, Loisy, and others—of whom some make out the author to have been a Gnostic, some an anti-Gnostic; according to some the Gospel was a polemic against Judaism, according to others against a heretical sect named after John the Baptist: while some are content with the assertion that the author was an unknown writer of the

second century, who composed the Gospel for the purpose of putting before the Church his view of Christ and Christianity.

There are a considerable number of critics who are disposed to take a middle position, not admitting that the Apostle was responsible for the composition or publication of the Gospel in its present form, but believing that parts of it may be from his pen, or else that he was one of the original sources from which the writer derived his information, or his inspiration, if that expression be preferred. Wendt, for example, thinks that the *discourses* are based on a genuine document, which may be classed with the two original sources of the Synoptics, while Wellhausen finds a Johannine nucleus in the *narrative* portion.¹ Renan thought the history was probably derived from the Apostle John through

¹ Many others (e.g. Delff, Spitta, Bousset, Schwartz) seek to arrive at a *Grundschrift* by a process of disintegration, but the view expressed even by such a radical critic as Schmiedel still finds general favour: "In the end we shall have to concur in the judgment of Strauss, that the Fourth Gospel is, like the seamless coat, not to be divided, but to be taken as it is."—E. Bi. ii. 2556.

one of his disciples. Holtzmann thinks that though the Apostle did not write it, the book may have owed much, perhaps its very existence, to his teaching and inspiration. Harnack thinks all the Johannine writings were produced about 80-110 by John the Presbyter (see pp. 186 ff.) with the aid of the Apostle's reminiscences; while Bousset would attribute them to a disciple of the Presbyter. In this category may also be included Schürer, Weizsäcker, Sabatier, Soltau, Dobschütz, E. A. Abbott, Briggs, Moffatt, and Bacon.

As regards the indications of the authorship to be found in Scripture, it is quite true that while the writer of the Gospel, as of the First Epistle, claims to have been an eye-witness of the Saviour's ministry, he nowhere expressly identifies himself with the Apostle John. But this is an inference which a careful reader can hardly fail to draw, when he observes the remarkable absence of John's name from the Gospel narrative except in connexion with the last meeting of the risen Christ with His disciples, on which occasion John and his brother are referred to as "the sons of Zebedee" (John 21^{1 f.}). The inference is con-

firmed when we take into account, further, that on several occasions the part assigned to the disciple whom Jesus loved, in relation to Peter, is precisely such as we might have expected of the Apostle John. We have another sign of the author's identity with the Apostle in the fact that, although generally exact in his mode of designation, he always calls the Baptist simply "John," without any mention of his office, as if he knew no other John from whom the Baptist had to be distinguished.

All this, as we have seen, is in harmony with the tradition of the Church. What, then, is to be said against accepting the Gospel as the work of the Apostle? Space will not permit us to notice all the minute objections raised, many of which have been so successfully met that they are no longer advanced. We shall only attempt to deal with the more important of the arguments still brought against the Johannine authorship.

One of the chief objections is that the account which the Gospel gives of the ministry of Jesus differs in many respects from what is found in the Synoptics. It lays the scene of the ministry chiefly in Judæa, and extends it to a period of

about three years, during which Jesus is represented to have been present in Jerusalem at five different feasts, including two Passovers, whereas the Synoptics tell of only one visit to Jerusalem, and seem to confine the ministry within less than a single year.

But in reality there is no contradiction, no absolute inconsistency, between the two accounts. For, on the one hand, the Fourth Gospel expressly recognizes two periods spent by Jesus and His disciples in Galilee (4⁴³⁻⁵⁴ and 6¹ - 7⁹), in addition to the short visit to Cana and Capernaum recorded in the second chapter; while, on the other hand, the form of expression used by Mark (1¹⁴ R.V.), when he states that "after that John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee," like Matthew's statement (4¹² R.V.) that "when He (Jesus) heard that John was delivered up, He withdrew into Galilee," implies that He had been somewhere else previous to the Baptist's imprisonment, which did not take place for a considerable period after His baptism. If we had only the Synoptics to guide us, we should be apt to think that the active ministry of Jesus did not begin till after John's imprisonment;

but we have here apparently one of the cases to which J. D. Michaelis refers, "where John appears in a delicate manner to have corrected the faults of his predecessors," for in the Fourth Gospel (3²²⁻²⁴) we read, "After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judæa; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison." At the beginning of the next chapter the true reason is given for departing again into Galilee—"When therefore the Lord knew how that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples), he left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee." This account of the ministry, as dating from the baptism of Jesus, not from the imprisonment of John the Baptist, is not only more probable in itself, but is more in harmony with the reference made to it by Peter when the apostles were about to appoint a successor to Judas Iscariot (Acts 1^{21 f.}): "Of the men therefore which have

accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection."

That Christ's ministry should have centred in Judæa and Jerusalem was only to be expected, if He had a message for the whole Jewish nation. Indeed, unless He had often taught in the capital, it would be difficult to understand His words of lamentation over Jerusalem (Luke 19⁴² R.V.), when He "wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes," or that other pathetic utterance recorded both by Matthew (23³⁷) and Luke (13³⁴), "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

The same thing may be argued from other points of view. It was incumbent on all Jews

to repair to Jerusalem three times a year to attend the Feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, and it would have been strange if Jesus had never gone up before His last fatal visit, even if His ministry had been as short as the Synoptic Gospels might lead us to believe. There is a tendency in some quarters to assume that the Synoptics are to be preferred to the Fourth Gospel where they do not agree with it. But when it is remembered that the author of the latter had the three others in his hands, or at all events within his reach, it will be seen that the reverse is the view which we should naturally take, especially having regard to the fact that tradition represents the Apostle as having written with the intention of supplying certain omissions in the other Gospels, and with the conception of a more orderly arrangement than Mark had attempted in his Gospel,—the want of order being, as Papias tells us, a feature which “John” recognized in Mark’s narrative, while he admitted it to be nevertheless quite reliable (cf. p. 122).

A good many critics are now beginning to see that in one very important matter the

Fourth Gospel is right and the Synoptics are wrong, namely, as to the date of the last Supper, which, according to the latter, took place on the evening of the Passover, but, according to the former, on the preceding evening (John 19¹⁴). Matthew and Mark give evidence unwittingly in favour of John's view when they represent it as part of the plot formed by the priests and elders that it should be carried out "not during the feast, lest a tumult arise among the people" (Matt. 26⁵ and Mark 14² R.V.); and Luke does the same when he reports Jesus as saying: "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God" (22¹⁵ f. R.V.). The wearing of a sword, too, by one of the followers of Jesus after they had partaken of the Supper, and Simon of Cyrene's coming into the city from the country on the day of the crucifixion, confirm the supposition that the Jewish Passover had not yet been celebrated. If the Fourth Gospel is right in this instance, it may also be right when it puts the cleansing of the temple at the beginning instead of the end of the

ministry. There could have been no more fitting initiation of Christ's work as a messenger of God, even apart from the assertion of His claims as the Messiah; and it seems far more likely that the Synoptists, having no place in their narrative for an earlier visit to Jerusalem, should have included the incident in their account of the final conflicts in the temple, than that the aged apostle or any other later writer should have diverged so widely from the narrative familiar to the Church, without having reason to do so.

Exception has been taken to the omission of our Saviour's baptism in the Fourth Gospel, and also to the representation which it gives of the Baptist's testimony to Jesus. But the baptism is really implied in the narrative, and we can understand how the testimony of the Baptist, which was involved in a true conception of his office, required to be specially emphasized when the last Gospel was written, if it be true, as some hostile critics have suggested, that there was still in Ephesus a remnant of the party indicated in the Book of Acts (18²⁴ ff.), who were disposed to call themselves disciples of the Baptist rather than

of Christ (cf. 1^s). In the same way fault has been found with the Gospel for omitting the institution of the Lord's Supper and for introducing sacramental teaching in connexion with the feeding of the multitude (John, chap. 6). But there was no necessity to repeat what had been sufficiently recorded by the three other Evangelists; and the discourse regarding the bread of life helps us to understand how the disciples could receive apparently without any surprise or difficulty the mysterious announcement, "This is my body."

Still stronger exception has been taken to the story of the raising of Lazarus from the dead, on the ground that there is no mention of it in the Synoptics,¹ and that there is no room for it in their account of Christ's last visit to Jerusalem. But, as regards the nature of the miracle, the Synoptics tell us of two other cases in which Jesus raised the dead to life; and, as to the order of events, their account is not always to be relied on. The

¹ For example, Wernle says: "That the three Synoptists mention not a syllable of this greatest of all the miracles of Jesus, is enough, quite by itself, to destroy all faith in the Johannine tradition,"

books are Gospels, not chronicles ; and, when we look at the question from a higher than a chronological standpoint, in the light of cause and effect, we can see that the alarm which was caused among the rulers by the public excitement produced by this crowning miracle, marked the crisis in the conflict which had been going on all along between the faith of the disciples and the unbelief of the Jews. This was the view taken by Schleiermacher more than fifty years ago : “The Johannine representation of the way in which the crisis of His fate was brought about is the only clear one.” And again : “I take it as established that the Gospel of John is the narrative of an eye-witness and forms an organic whole. The first three Gospels are compilations formed out of various narratives which had arisen independently ; their discourses are composite structures, and their presentation of the history is such that one can form no idea of the grouping of events.”

Another thing which is a stumbling-block to many critics is the marked difference between the style of our Saviour’s teaching in the Fourth Gospel and that which is met

with in the other three. In the Synoptics Christ's utterances are generally of a popular character, frequently taking the form of parables, and relating to the laws and the prospects of the Kingdom of Heaven, while in this Gospel they are largely of a theological nature, and take the form of arguments addressed to the Jewish authorities regarding Christ's claims. Modern critics make a good deal of this objection, but they have not improved much on Bretschneider, the first formidable opponent of the Gospel, who wrote as follows nearly a hundred years ago :—

“Jesus, as pictured by the earlier Gospels, never employs dialectic skill, the ambiguity of artifice, a mystical style, whether he be speaking, preaching or disputing; on the contrary, there is the utmost simplicity, clearness, a certain natural eloquence which owes far more to the genius of the mind than to acquired art. In the Fourth Gospel he disputes as the dialectician, his speech is ambiguous, his style mystical, he deals in obscurities, so much so that even very learned people are quite in the dark as to the real meaning of many of his sayings. In the one case there are short and

pregnant utterances, parables so beautiful and of such inward truth that they grip the attention and sink deep into the soul ; in the other the parabolic style of teaching is practically absent. In the one case the question turns on conduct, on rules of life, the Mosaic law, errors of the Jewish people ; in the other the speaker is concerned with dogma, with metaphysics, with his own divine nature and dignity." With regard to the difference in the two portraits of Jesus, Bretschneider says : " The one has almost nothing to bring forward as to his divine nature, and judging by his utterances, will solely describe himself as endowed with divine gifts, sent by God, Messiah ; as for the other, he makes everything turn on himself, pre-existence is claimed, one with God he has shared the divine glory, he had come down from heaven in all the fullness of divine knowledge and might ; he is about to return speedily to the throne on high." ¹

What is to be said in answer to this ? In the first place, it is not to be supposed that Jesus would be confined to one mode of address

¹ These quotations from the *Probabilia* are taken from H. L. Jackson's work on " The Fourth Gospel ".

or one style of argument. We might expect Him to adapt His teaching to the wants and the capacities of the different classes of hearers, as we know He did in dealing with individuals. Dialectics which were suitable for the trained ecclesiastics of Jerusalem would have been quite out of place among the unsophisticated people of Galilee, who knew little of doctrinal theology. Yet nowhere in the Fourth Gospel does Jesus utter any more profound truth, or advance any higher claim, than He does in words recorded in the eleventh chapter of Matthew's Gospel, where we read : " At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes : yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight. All things have been delivered unto me of my Father : and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father ; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." And again : " Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

If Jesus was more reticent regarding His Messiahship in addressing the Galilæan multitude, it was doubtless because the flames of insurrection would have been so easily kindled there. But even in Judæa He did not press His claims as the Messiah. Many of His words and actions were eminently in keeping with that office even as conceived by the Jewish nation ; but He left every man to form his own impressions on the subject, and even His disciples did not realize the height of His calling till after He rose from the dead. At His first visit to Jerusalem He showed no desire to take people into His confidence and increase the number of His avowed followers, but rather the reverse (John 2²³ ff.). Even towards the close of His ministry the Jewish populace were so uncertain regarding the nature of His claims that when He was in the temple “ the Jews came round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou hold us in suspense ? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly ” (John 10²⁴).

As regards His rebukes to the scribes and the chief priests and Pharisees, it should not be forgotten that the Synoptics attribute to

Him a tone of still greater severity in the arguments and appeals which He addressed to the same men a few days before His crucifixion. If there had not been such previous encounters as the Fourth Gospel records, it would have been difficult to understand the strong and deep-seated antagonism on the part of the Jewish authorities, which made them so bent on His destruction.

Such considerations as these may help to meet the difficulty created by the striking difference of style and treatment in the fourth as compared with the three earlier Gospels. But no explanation will be satisfactory which leaves out of account the personal idiosyncrasies of the writer and the circumstances of the age whose spiritual needs his book was intended to meet—when the Christian Church had completely broken with Judaism and was threatened with many subtle forms of error within its own pale. While we cannot doubt that the words which the Evangelist puts into our Lord's mouth are in essential harmony with what He had said, it was inevitable that, in giving his personal reminiscences of what had taken place more than fifty years before,

and in recalling discourses of which no record had been preserved, the Apostle's imagination should come to the aid of his memory. It would have been strange too, if, after having passed through such a long and wonderful experience, and writing, as he was doing, in Ephesus, a meeting-place of Oriental mysticism and Greek philosophy, he had not seen in the Saviour's words deeper meanings and wider implications than he could ever have divined at the time they were uttered.

There is a point of view not yet referred to, from which the surprising differences between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics may be regarded as an evidence that the former had apostolic authority behind it. Otherwise how can we account for its gaining general acceptance in all parts of the world, although it came so much later than the other Gospels and set forth views of Christ's life and teaching so very different from those to which the Church had been accustomed for a generation?

The strength of this argument is much enhanced when we find that closer examination tends to explain away most of the apparent

inconsistencies, and at the same time brings to light many confirmations of the author's claim to personal knowledge of the incidents and conversations he records.¹ The narratives are generally so true, in detail, to Jewish opinion and practice at the period referred to, and present traits of character, in those who come upon the scene, so vividly and so consistently, as to imply the possession of marvellous literary genius on the part of the writer, unless he had lived in Palestine in close association with our Lord and His apostles, or derived his information from some one who had done so. Though he brings before us a great variety of character in a variety of circumstances, and is generally very precise in describing time

¹ It is significant that the veteran critic, Dr. E. A. Abbott, in the preface to his recently published Introduction to his work on "The Fourfold Gospel," says: "I find that the Fourth Gospel, in spite of its poetic nature, is closer to history than I had supposed. The study of it, and especially of those passages where it intervenes to explain expressions in Mark altered or omitted by Luke, appears to me to throw new light on the words, acts, and purposes of Christ, and to give increased weight to His claims on our faith and worship."

and place and number and other particulars, he has not been proved guilty of a single anachronism. We have illustrations of his accuracy in the details given of the first calling of the disciples by the banks of the Jordan, of Christ's examination in the presence of Annas before His trial by Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, of the crucifixion, of the conversation with Pilate, and of the resurrection; as well as in the circumstantial account given of the healing of the man born blind and the subsequent inquiry, and of the conversations which our Lord held with Nathanael and with the woman of Samaria. Not least remarkable is the acquaintance the author shows with the state of parties in Jerusalem, and the plans and policy of the high court. This is not so surprising, however, if he was indeed that "other disciple" who accompanied Peter to the high priest's palace, and, being known to the high priest, used his influence to procure Peter's admission. Of this supposition we have a curious confirmation in the fact that it is the author of the Fourth Gospel only who tells us that the name of the high priest's servant whose ear was cut off was Malchus,

and that it was Peter who inflicted the wound.¹

Recently a disposition has been shown by a number of critics to admit the claim of the writer to be an eye-witness, and to identify him with the disciple whom Jesus loved, but not with the Apostle John. In particular, it has been argued that John Mark fulfils all the requirements of the case. As his mother had a house in Jerusalem, he may be identified with the disciple known to the high priest (18^{15 f.}), through whose influence Peter was admitted to the palace, as well as with the disciple who was entrusted by Jesus at the cross with the care of His mother and took her in that same hour to his own home (19^{26 f.}). The acceptance of this theory is quite consistent with the historicity of the book, but there is nothing to support it in the early life of John Mark so far as known to us, and it would leave the Apostle John and his brother in strange obscurity, considering the prominence assigned to them in the Synoptics, and

¹ For a fuller statement of the internal evidence the author may refer to his Introduction to the volume on St. John's Gospel in the "Century Bible."

the intimate way in which John is associated with Peter not only there but also in the Book of Acts and in the Epistle to the Galatians. Similar objections may be taken to other theories which would identify "the disciple whom Jesus loved" with some other John of Jerusalem than the Apostle (as held by Delff, von Dobschütz, Burkitt, and others). On the other hand, if we identify the disciple whom Jesus loved with the Apostle John, we get a harmonious picture of him, alike in relation to his Master and his fellow-disciples (cf. Luke 22⁸; John 13²³, 20³, and 21).

A more serious rival than John Mark is "John the Presbyter," although the only evidence for his existence is found in a passage in the writings of Papias, which has been preserved by Eusebius. It reads as follows: "If I met anywhere with one who had been a follower of the Elders, I used to inquire as to the discourses of the Elders — what was said by Andrew, or by Peter, or by Philip, or by Thomas, or James, or by John, or Matthew, or any other of the Lord's disciples, and what Aristion and the Elder John, disciples of the Lord, say." From this Eusebius inferred

that there were two Johns at Ephesus, one the Apostle, and the other known as John the Presbyter, a contemporary of Papias. This seems a natural interpretation of the passage, but the only confirmation of it that Eusebius offers (on the authority of Dionysius of Alexandria, who wrote in the previous century) is that there were two tombs at Ephesus associated with the name of John, and that if the theory were accepted it would admit of a separate author being assigned to the Apocalypse, whose apostolic origin both Eusebius and Dionysius were inclined to doubt. This is really all the evidence that has been adduced for the separate existence of John the Presbyter (i.e. Elder). Against it is the fact that none of the other writers previous to Dionysius who were connected with Asia Minor (in particular Justin, Irenæus—with whom we may associate Polycarp—and Polycrates), seems ever to have heard of any leader of the Church in Asia Minor or elsewhere bearing the name of John, except the Apostle. In view of the fact that Justin and Irenæus were well acquainted with the writings of Papias, we may be excused if we decline to

accept Eusebius's novel interpretation of the words in question, especially as he had a literary motive for it, as indicated above. There is really nothing to prevent us from identifying the "Elder John, a disciple of the Lord," who is referred to in the closing part of the statement as still alive when Papias used to make his inquiries,¹ with the "John" who, in the preceding clause, is mentioned among the apostles ("the Lord's disciples"), whose sayings had been reported to him by men of a former generation. This identification is the more probable, as the writer of II and III John assumes to himself the name of "the elder"—the very title given to "John" by Papias at the close of his statement, whereas all that Peter claims for himself is that he is "a fellow-elder" (I Peter v. 1).²

If "John the Presbyter" was not the Apostle, he must have been some one who could speak with authority regarding the early his-

¹ Supposed to have been made about the close of the first century.

² A careful and learned argument in support of this view will be found in Dom J. Chapman's "John the Presbyter" (1911).

tory of the Church, for Papias quotes elsewhere his testimony regarding the authorship and composition of the Gospel of Mark. If the Fourth Gospel was his work, it may still have been a trustworthy record, and the association of the Apostle's name with the book may have been due to a popular misapprehension. Prof. Harnack, however, is inclined to think that it was the result of a deliberate attempt to invest the Gospel with a fictitious authority, although he accepts the tradition that the Apostle spent his later years at Ephesus. The supposition is one that does little honour to the early Church and its leaders. Such men as Polycarp and Irenæus must have been poor guardians of the truth, if they allowed themselves and others to be deceived in a matter of such vital importance.

Of late there has been an increasing tendency among negative critics to reject the tradition, which was widely spread before the end of the second century, as to the Apostle John's residence in Ephesus. In support of this view (which was first taken by Vogel in 1801 and adopted by Keim) they cite a statement attributed to Papias and Origen by Georgius

Hamartolus, an obscure chronicler of the ninth century, to the effect that John the Apostle was put to death by the Jews, after being recalled from Patmos to Ephesus in the reign of Nero. Confirmation of this is alleged to be found in a late manuscript of an epitomizer of Philip of Side, a chronicler of the fifth century, where it is stated that John and James were killed by the Jews. As regards Origen it is found that Georgius was mistaken, and it is not unlikely he misunderstood Papias also, who may have been referring to John the Baptist; or Papias may have been misled, as Clemen suggests, by the prediction referred to below. If Papias really said that John was put to death by Herod at the same time as his brother, this is directly at variance with Acts (chap. 12), and also with Galatians (2⁹) where John is spoken of, at a later period, as one of those "who were reputed to be pillars." Moreover, if such a fact was recorded by Papias, it is strange that none of the Christians of Asia Minor in succeeding generations betrays any knowledge of it. Justin Martyr and Irenæus, who were well acquainted with the country, and Polycrates, who was Bishop

of Ephesus *c.* 190, all speak with confidence of the Apostle's connexion with Ephesus ; and the same may be said of the writer of the Leucian Acts of John (*c.* 150),¹ Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebius. Such positive testimony is not to be set aside on account of the silence of Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Ignatius, and Hegesippus.

In all probability the story about John's martyrdom arose from the prevalent belief that Jesus had predicted a similar death for the two brothers, when He said to them, "Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of ; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized" (Mark 10^{38 f.} ; cf. Matt. 20^{20 f.} A.V.). Indeed we know as a matter of fact that from this cause several legends arose regarding the fate of the two brothers.

Finally, if we wish to judge this Gospel fairly, we ought always to bear in mind the avowed purpose of the author, which is, that his readers may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing they may

¹ Corssen and Pfeleiderer regard the Gospel as designed to counteract the Docetic teaching of this apocryphal book.

have life in His name—a very different object from that of the Third Gospel, which is that the reader may know the certainty of those things wherein he has been instructed. The key to this Gospel is found in the prologue, where Divine revelation culminates in the incarnate Word. This idea dominates the mind of the writer and stamps its character upon the whole book. Believing, as he did, in the continual presence of the Saviour through the influence of the Holy Spirit, and reflecting on the wonderful words and works which he still treasured in his memory, the last and most thoughtful of those who had enjoyed personal intercourse with Him who was God manifest in the flesh, was enabled to give to the sacred life a more spiritual interpretation than the earlier Evangelists had done, and has bequeathed to the Church a Gospel which is as remarkable for its simplicity of style as for its sublimity of thought. When John wrote, he beheld the ministry of Jesus with other eyes, he understood His words in a higher and fuller sense, than when he walked with Him over the fields of Galilee or in the streets of Jerusalem.

Since much that at the first, in deed and word,
Lay simply and sufficiently exposed,
Had grown (or else my soul was grown to match,
Fed through such years, familiar with such light,
Guarded and guided still to see and speak)
Of new significance and fresh result ;
What first were guessed as points I now knew stars,
And named them in the Gospel I have writ.

—BROWNING.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN

This Epistle has very strong external evidence in its favour, and is included by Eusebius among the *Homologoumena*. Internally it presents a striking contrast, both in form and substance, to the Epistles of Paul ; but, on the other hand, in many of its features, it bears a resemblance to the Fourth Gospel. The resemblance is so close (closer, according to Holtzmann, than between the Third Gospel and the Acts) that the Epistle has been likened to a postscript, or a pendant, or a covering letter ; but perhaps it might be better described as a counterpart, designed to show how those great truths regarding God and man, which in the Gospel are historically illustrated in the person of Jesus Christ, ought to be realized in the lives of His followers.

The genuineness of all the three Epistles of John was denied by Joseph Scaliger more than three hundred years ago, but the first serious attack on this Epistle was made by F. C. Baur, who rejected both it and the Gospel. Baur held the Epistle to be an imitation of the Gospel, and the majority of his followers attribute the two compositions to different authors, neither of whom they admit to be the Apostle John, their chief reason for rejecting the Epistle being that it differs so irreconcilably from the Apocalypse, which they hold to be genuine. A few of them accept the single authorship of Gospel and Epistle, and others of them admit that the author of the latter may have had a hand in the revision of the Gospel, when the twenty-first chapter was added. On the other hand, almost all critics who admit the apostolic authorship of the Gospel also accept the Epistle, and regard the differences which, amid all their similarity, may be discerned between them, as sufficient to prove their independence and refute Baur's theory of imitation.

The ground on which the rejection of the Epistle is usually based is that it contains

references to Gnostic heresies of the second century. But the objection is met by pointing out that the Johannine authorship is consistent with a very late date in the first century, and that the passages in question ($2^{22} f.$, $4^2 f.$, etc.) are quite intelligible on the supposition that they refer to Docetic views, which began to be held about this time, and especially to the doctrinal vagaries associated with the name of Cerinthus, who taught that the Christ became united with Jesus only at his baptism and left him at his passion.

Owing to the absence of a superscription and greeting, and of some other features usually found in an epistle, I John has been described as a "catholic homily," which might as fitly have been delivered to a Christian audience as addressed to a Church in writing. There is no indication to what Church or Churches it was to be sent, but probably it was more or less an encyclical intended for a circle of Churches in the neighbourhood of Ephesus, from which we may suppose it to have emanated. The writer frequently addresses his readers in such terms of fatherly affection as would well befit the aged Apostle.

His last words are, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (A. V.)—an exhortation specially appropriate at Ephesus, which was a stronghold of idolatry.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN

The nature of these two short letters (which, as Origen said, do not contain a hundred lines between them) precludes any reasonable suspicion of their genuineness, as we can hardly conceive of any object being served by associating them with the name of "the elder." Their brevity and insignificance also account for the scanty references to them in patristic literature; and when we consider their unsuitableness for reading in church, owing to their private and personal nature (which makes them letters in the strictest sense), we cannot wonder at their tardy recognition in parts of the Church where their origin was little known. It is very unlikely, indeed, that they would ever have been preserved, if they had not been invested with authority from the first in the community or communities to which they were addressed.

There is sufficient evidence to show that before the end of the second century the Second Epistle was known and acknowledged as written by the Apostle John; but the Third Epistle was later in obtaining recognition. The two are so closely related, however, that Jerome was justified in calling them twin sisters. While he admitted the common authorship of the First Epistle and the Fourth Gospel, he attributed the Second and Third Epistles to "John the Presbyter," whose separate existence in Asia Minor was believed in by Eusebius on the strength of the vague statement made by Papias (cf. pp. 186 ff.). This view is still taken by a considerable number of scholars in modern times, but it is scarcely likely to prevail, and the claims made for the mysterious presbyter must be settled in some other way. It is generally admitted that the Second Epistle resembles the First both in ideas and expressions, and there is so great a family likeness in all three that they must stand or fall together.

The title of "the elder" was one which the writer could only fitly assume (cf. I Peter 5¹), if he was the elder *par excellence* among the

hundreds of elders in Asia Minor at that time ; and the use of it harmonizes with the quiet tone of authority which runs through the Epistles. Such a position the general tradition of the Church, from the earliest times, has attributed to the Apostle John.

There has been much controversy as to whether the Second Epistle is addressed to a Church or to an individual, and, if to an individual, whether we are to translate the designation of the recipient (*ἐκλεκτῇ κυρίᾳ*) by “the elect lady,” or “the lady Eklektē,” or “the elect Kyria.” The opinion held by Jerome that a Church was referred to under the figure of a lady and her children has been recently gaining ground among all classes of critics. Such a metaphor need not surprise us when employed by a writer so fond of symbolism as the author of the Fourth Gospel, and it gives more dignity to the sentiments and language of the Epistle. In particular it suits better the closing message sent by “the elder” : “The children of thine elect sister salute thee”—language which is intelligible and natural when the message comes from the members of a Church, but would be strangely

defective if the greeting came merely from the sister's children and not from herself.

Probably the local destination of the two letters was the same, II John being the previous (or possibly the accompanying) communication referred to in III John v. 9. The object of the letters, however, was somewhat different, the former being directed against heresy, while the latter relates rather to the evils of schism. Both illustrate the difficulties encountered by those who were responsible for the government and administration of the Church at that early period of her history.

There is no means of determining the date of the Epistles, or discovering who were their recipients, beyond inferring that they were composed in the last quarter of the first century, and that they were in all probability intended for Christians in Asia Minor.

THE REVELATION OF S. JOHN THE DIVINE

A few words still remain to be said with regard to "The Revelation," otherwise called the *Apocalypse* (the Unveiling). It is a book whose origin, authorship, and interpretation have been the subject of infinite controversy, beginning

in the second century and culminating in the voluminous literature which has appeared on the subject during the last hundred years.

The Apocalypse shared the fate of the Fourth Gospel in being attributed by a heretical sect in the latter half of the second century to Cerinthus, the chief Gnostic antagonist of the Apostle John: but otherwise it held a secure position in the Church, and is strongly attested from an early period in the second century. The first serious attack upon the Johannine authorship was made in the third century by Dionysius of Alexandria, who was chiefly influenced by the marked difference between the barbarous Greek of the Apocalypse and the more correct grammar and better style of the Gospel—an argument which has also led not a few modern critics to conclude that both could not have been written by the same author.¹ Dionysius thought the Apocalypse might be the work, not of John Mark (though he mentions him in this connexion), but of a John of Ephesus other than the Apostle, there

¹In this question, however, the Hebraic features of the Gospel, both in style and otherwise, must not be overlooked.

being two tombs of John shown, as he says, in that city. This view was favoured by Eusebius and by the Eastern Church generally, which was slow to admit the book into the Canon. In the West, on the contrary, its canonicity was hardly ever disputed till the Reformation, when it was looked upon with suspicion by Luther and Zwingli and some of their followers, but its ecclesiastical authority remained unimpaired. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was subjected to increasing criticism.

In the middle of last century the prevailing opinion among German critics was that John the Presbyter, not John the Apostle, was the author of the work, and this view is still held by many scholars, including some of the most eminent English critics. On the other hand, Baur and his immediate followers maintained the apostolic authorship and dated the publication of the work about A.D. 70. A number of recent writers regard the use of the name John in the opening of the book as a case of pseudonymity, which was a common thing in apocalyptic literature, and hold the epistles to the seven Churches, with which the book

commences, to be a separate composition. Zahn, on the other hand, attributes the whole book to the Apostle, as Sir William Ramsay also does. Briggs takes a similar view as regards the epistles and a considerable part of the remainder of the book, while Spitta believes it to be partly based on a Christian apocalypse written about A.D. 60 by John Mark, to whom Hitzig attributed the whole book.

Dr. Swete is so impressed with the linguistic difference between the Gospel and the Apocalypse that he holds it to be "due to personal character rather than to relative familiarity with Greek," the latter being an explanation which commended itself to many, when it was supposed there had been an interval of twenty or thirty years between the composition of the two books. But Harnack, on the strength of the deep, underlying similarity of their thought, holds the two books to have had the same author, whom he identifies with John the Presbyter, while Ramsay and Feine, on the same principle, attribute both to the Apostle. In this connexion we have to bear in mind the part that may have been

taken by amanuenses, as well as the peculiarities of apocalyptic literature and the position of a convict in Patmos.

The question of literary sources, and of revisions or interpolations, has of late received much greater attention than that of the personal authorship. In the investigations and discussions which have been going on for the last thirty years, various theories of composition have been advanced by Weizsäcker, Völter, Vischer, Spitta, J. Weiss, Wellhausen, Gunkel, Bousset, and others. An important point, suggested by Gunkel and admitted by Bousset, is the likelihood of many elements in the book having come from ancient Jewish sources through a succession of traditions derived from Babylonian, Persian, or Egyptian sources.¹ The composite nature of the book may be inferred from the fact that some passages (especially chapter 11) appear to have been written while Jerusalem was still standing, while others imply that the period of the

¹ In chapter 12. Gunkel finds a reflection of the birth of Marduk, and Bousset of that of Horus; while Dieterich thinks he can trace in it a reminiscence of the birth of Apollo.

compulsory worship of Cæsar had set in (13^{14 f.}, etc.); as well as from the symptoms, in some passages, of Jewish exclusiveness, and, in others, of a broad missionary outlook (7⁴⁻⁹). That the book in its present form has a literary unity about it cannot be denied;¹ but it seems equally certain that its author made use of some earlier source or sources, Jewish or Christian,—though, when it comes to details, the critics are as hopelessly at variance on this question as with respect to the authorship.

With regard to its interpretation, the moderns have the credit of being the first to realize that the key to its meaning is, partly at least, to be found in contemporary events, and that its relation to the Book of Daniel, as well as to other apocalyptic literature which has recently come to light, must not be left out of sight. As to its occasion and date, it is now generally agreed that in its present form it appeared, as Irenæus informs us, towards the close of

¹ Jülicher says: "The uniformity of the book in language, style, and tone must not be forgotten, and especially the fact that the general plan—introduction, seven epistles, three cycles of seven visions, Kingdom of the Messiah on earth, end of the world, New Jerusalem, and finally the literary conclusion—is perfectly straightforward."

the reign of Domitian, say A.D. 95, when the persecution of the Christians had become so much a matter of public policy that it would have been dangerous for them to speak plainly in matters affecting their relation to the State. It is also agreed that the great theme of the book is the heroic stand the members of the Church were called upon to make against the worship of the Emperor, which was then being enforced by the Roman authorities, especially in Asia Minor. It hardly admits of doubt that the first beast rising out of the abyss is to be identified with Nero, the "number of the beast" (666) corresponding to his official designation in Greek, and that the second beast represents the provincial priesthood of Asia Minor, while the seven heads and the ten horns symbolize the power of the Roman Empire looked at from different points of view. The healing of the wounded head of the beast is to be understood with reference to the expected return from the underworld of Nero, as the protagonist of evil, to wage war with Christ at His second coming.

The Chiliastic, or literal and sensuous view of the Thousand Years (20th c.), which was

held by Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Hippolytus, and others, has given place to a more spiritual interpretation, which leaves room for many symbolic applications of the visions and prophecies contained in the book, and recognizes its fitness in all generations to sustain the faith and courage of Christians in times of danger and distress. As a modern critic, who has departed widely from the traditional view of its authorship, has said: "The book has its imperishable religious worth, because of the energy of faith that finds expression in it and the splendid certainty of its conviction that God's cause remains always the best and is one with the cause of Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER V

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES AND THE CON- TEMPORARY EPISTLES OF PAUL

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

IT is from this book that we derive our chief knowledge of the early history of the Church. Probably no historical work has ever been subjected to so severe examination from every point of view ; but, generally speaking, the more thoroughly it has been tested, where a test could be applied, the more firmly has its character been established as a faithful and reliable account of the early history of the Church, from the pen of a contemporary writer.

The identity of its authorship with that of the Third Gospel is admitted with practical unanimity. It is implied in the opening statement addressed to Theophilus, to whom "the former treatise" had been dedicated, and it is borne out by the general similarity in style and

character between the two books. Who the author was, is another question. According to the unanimous tradition of the Church he was Luke, "the beloved physician," Paul's travelling companion, who was with him during his imprisonment at Rome (Col. 4¹⁴, Philemon v. 24). Even among negative critics there are very few who deny that Luke had a hand in the composition of the two books; and as regards Acts the only question is whether the whole narrative or only part of it came from his pen.

Numberless theories have been proposed by those who cannot believe that the whole book was the work of Luke. These theories all rest on the fact that in certain sections¹ of the book the writer employs the first person plural, as if to indicate that he had been an eye-witness of what he records, whereas in the rest of the book the ordinary style of a historian is adopted. There are indeed a few critics who would deny to Luke even the authorship of this travel-diary, as it has been called, some of them ascribing it to Titus, though there is no evidence of his having accompanied Paul to Rome or of his ever having been there at all;

¹ Acts 16¹⁰ - 17; 20⁵ - 21¹⁸; 27¹ - 28¹⁶.

others to Timothy, though he is mentioned in chap. 20^{4 f.} in such a way as to imply that he was not the writer; others to Silas (Silvanus), though he also is mentioned in the diary, by name, a few verses after the writer has made use of the first person plural (16¹⁹).

Among the critics who admit Luke's connexion with part of the narrative, there are a considerable number who hold that the book as a whole is a work of the second century.¹ This was the view generally maintained by the Tübingen school, who attributed the composition to a Pauline Christian, desirous to promote the interests of catholicity by harmonizing the Petrine and Pauline elements in the Church of the second century. It is now generally acknowledged, however, that the doctrinal differences in the Apostolic Church were greatly exaggerated by Baur and his followers, and that the policy of reconciliation had less to

¹ E.g. Schwegler, Overbeck, Keim, Hausrath, Davidson, Pfeiderer, and Schmiedel. — Yet, if the dedication be genuine (1¹; cf. Luke 1¹⁻⁴), the "We" passages, as they are called, which imply that the writer was a contemporary of Paul, would have put a second-century author in an awkward position.

do with the production of the New Testament books than they imagined. In the case of this book in particular, Baur's theory has been discredited by the most recent criticism, which finds it to be comparatively free from doctrinal bias and pronounces it to be generally trustworthy.

It is true that the miracles, which enter so largely into the narrative, are still a stumbling-block to many critics, and predispose them to disparage the historical character of the book. For this purpose some of them try to reduce Luke's share in it to a minimum, and attribute the book in its present form to a redactor of the second century. The arguments for putting this construction on it are of a very conjectural and precarious nature. The chief reason alleged is that it betrays the influence of Josephus, who wrote near the end of the first century. But this alleged dependence is so uncertain that it is denied by many of the most eminent critics both in this country and in Germany, such as Reuss, Schürer, Zahn, Harnack,¹

¹ Harnack says: "Schürer sums up as follows: Either St. Luke had not read Josephus, or, if he had read him,

Bousset, Wellhausen, Salmon, Sanday, and Plummer, while on the other side are ranged Krenkel, Holtzmann, Schmiedel, Wendt, and Burkitt. That there should be some coincidences between two historians belonging to the same century and dealing with the same or similar topics, is not surprising. But how unsafe it is to argue from such a phenomenon is evident from the fact that nowhere is the resemblance more noticeable than in the account of Paul's voyage and shipwreck, which was certainly written long before the autobiography of Josephus, where we have an account of a similar experience.

Critics have fastened on one passage in particular, not included in the travel-document, which appears to them to show unmistakable signs of being derived from Josephus, namely Acts 5^{36 f.}. There Luke refers first to Theudas, and afterwards to Judas of Galilee, as having stirred up the Jews against the Roman power by appeals to their Messianic hopes. What seems to be a parallel passage is found in the twentieth book of Josephus's "Anti-he had forgotten what he had read. Schürer here exactly hits the mark."

quities," where the names of Theudas and Judas the Gaulonite are also introduced, with an interval of a few verses between them. But if the writer in Acts got his information from this passage, he must have read it with a carelessness very unlike his usual habits. For Josephus states plainly when the risings under these two leaders took place; the one under Theudas, though mentioned first, being much later in time than that under Judas the Gaulonite, and being some years subsequent to the speech of Gamaliel in which the risings in question are referred to. Such carelessness would be all the more surprising as the writer in Acts states the number of men who joined themselves to Theudas, namely, about four hundred, a detail not mentioned by Josephus, and gives quite a different account of the insurrection from that of Josephus. In these circumstances, the most reasonable inference seems to be that there had been two men bearing the name of Theudas (quite a common name among the Jews), who had at different times headed a revolt, though it is also quite conceivable that Luke had received an imperfect report of Gamaliel's speech.

There is a passage in the Gospel which is also alleged to show the influence of Josephus, namely, Luke 3¹, where Lysanias is mentioned as the tetrarch of Abilene. It seems to be certain that at the time in question Lysanias was dead, and, as Josephus (XX, chap. 7) refers to Abilene as belonging to the tetrarchy of Lysanias, it is held that this reference has been the cause of the mistake in the Book of Acts. But Sir William Ramsay has shown that this is not a safe inference, as the tetrarchy might still be called by the name of Lysanias even after his death.

In this connexion it is worth noting, as telling, so far, against the supposition of dependence on Josephus in these two passages, that there is every reason to regard the description of the death of Herod in Acts (12²¹ ff.) as independent of the account of it given by Josephus (XIX, 8²).

Another great argument against the Lucan authorship is derived from an alleged inconsistency between Paul's relation to the Jewish law in his Epistles and the more favourable attitude attributed to him in Acts. Objection is specially taken to the apparent want of

harmony between the account of his visit to Jerusalem in the fifteenth chapter of Acts and the allusion to it in the second chapter of Galatians. Ramsay meets the difficulty by identifying the visit in Galatians with that referred to in the eleventh chapter of Acts, while other critics find a sufficient explanation in the fact that in Acts it is the public aspect of the matter that is chiefly dealt with, whereas in Galatians the Apostle is looking at it from a private and personal point of view. Harnack also suggests that the inconsistency to a great extent disappears if we adopt the Western reading in the apostolic decree (Acts 15^{20, 29}), which omits the reference to "things strangled," so that the prohibition would include only offences against the moral law, namely, idolatry, murder ("blood"), and fornication, all which Paul would be as ready to condemn as any of the other apostles. But this view has not met with much acceptance.

There are other passages which are said to show the Apostle's character in a false and unworthy light (especially 21^{20 ff.}, 23⁶, and 26⁶). But we would require to have a fuller knowledge of the circumstances in order to judge

of Paul's conduct, and we may maintain the genuineness of the book without claiming infallibility for its writer or perfection for the Apostle.

Against all such problematic objections to the Lucan authorship we have a great amount of positive evidence in its favour.

In the first place, as regards external evidence, there is no trace of its genuineness ever having been challenged in any age or country until the rise of modern criticism in last century. It is not so frequently quoted by early Christian writers as the Third Gospel, and it seems to have taken longer to come into general use, but that is only what might have been expected, considering the nature of its contents; and the fact is of little consequence if it be admitted that the two books have a common author, the evidence in their favour having then a cumulative force. In the case of Acts we find traces of its language in Clement of Rome, in the *Didaché*, in Ignatius, in Polycarp; and what is particularly significant is that the apparent quotations are taken from other parts of the book than those in the travel-document of which we have

spoken. It also appears to have been used by Justin Martyr (A.D. 155) and Tatian (170); and it has a place in the two earliest versions.

But the internal evidence is still more weighty and convincing. A careful analysis of its language has shown that there are seventeen words and phrases scattered throughout the book that are found nowhere else in the New Testament, and there are fifty-eight words common to the Third Gospel and Acts that are also found nowhere else in the New Testament. Compared with its relation to the two other Synoptics, Acts is found to have much more in common with the Third Gospel, as might have been expected if these two books had the same author. After giving figures to illustrate their verbal relations, Sir John Hawkins asks: "Is it not utterly improbable that the language of the original writer of the 'We'-Sections should have chanced to have so very many more correspondences with the language of the subsequent compiler than with that of Matthew or Mark?" ("Horæ Synopticæ," p. 185).

To this we may add that while there is no trace of any artificial dove-tailing of the diary

sections into other parts of the book, there are cross-references here and there which betoken a unity of plan and composition. For example, in 6⁵, Philip is introduced to us as one of the seven men chosen to look after the poor in Jerusalem; then at 8⁴⁰ he is represented as "preaching the gospel in all the cities till he came to Cæsarea"; and then at 21⁸, after the arrival of Paul and his party at Cæsarea, the historian says: "and entering into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we abode with him."

Another strong argument for the unity and the genuineness of Acts is afforded by the medical language which occurs in all parts of the book and also in the Third Gospel. This feature was observed long ago by Wetstein and Bengel, but it was reserved for Dr. Hobart in his work on the "Medical Language of St. Luke" to exhibit the evidence in its full strength. The force of the argument is now generally acknowledged both by British and Continental writers, but it has not prevented Dr. McGiffert from suggesting that the writer may have been some other Luke than the companion of Paul!

Perhaps the most convincing of all the arguments in favour of the traditional view is to be found in the accuracy of the political and topographical allusions occurring in all parts of the book, and in the entire absence of any such second-century colouring as we find in the "Acts of Paul and Thecla" and the "Clementine Homilies." We are largely indebted to Sir William Ramsay for this kind of evidence, which is absolute and objective as compared with the hypothetical and subjective nature of the arguments generally brought against the genuineness and authenticity of the book. The correctness of the titles applied to the various rulers who come upon the scene—the title of "proconsul" to Sergius Paulus of Cyprus and Gallio of Corinth (13⁷; 18¹²); that of "praetors" to the magistrates of Philippi (16^{20 ff.}); of "politarchs" to those of Thessalonica (17⁶); and of "chief man" to the governor of Malta (28⁷)—no less than the precision with which Lystra and Derbe (but not Iconium) are described as "cities of Lycaonia" (14⁶), all testify to the character of the writer as a careful historian, and betoken an acquaintance with the state

of things at the time referred to, which a second-century writer would have been very unlikely to possess.

In the account of Paul's voyage and shipwreck we have a remarkable illustration of the writer's accuracy. For the discovery of this evidence we are largely indebted to the investigations of a Glasgow citizen, of last century, James Smith, of Jordanhill, whose "Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul" is an acknowledged authority on the subject. Dr. Breusing, Director of the "Seefahrtschule," Bremen, endorses Mr. Smith's testimony when he says: "The most valuable nautical document of antiquity which has come down to us is the account of the voyage and shipwreck of the Apostle Paul. Every one can see at a glance that it could only have been composed by an eye-witness."

It has often been pointed out that in Acts there is no sign of acquaintance with any of the Epistles of Paul, and this fact has sometimes been supposed to be prejudicial to the claims of the former or the latter, as the case may be. But rightly viewed it is favourable to the genuineness of Acts. For we know that

towards the end of the first century the Epistles of Paul, or some of them at least, were so well known and so highly prized by the Christian world that any one wishing to give an account of the life and labours of the Apostle would have been sure to consult them and to betray his acquaintance with them. But, if Acts was written, at a comparatively early period, by a man who had become acquainted with the facts through long and intimate association with Paul, we can understand how there should be no reference to the Epistles in his narrative. Yet we find that there is a certain similarity of thought and diction between the history and the letters, such as we might have expected from the sympathy and fellowship between the two writers; and in the "undesigned coincidences," set forth by Paley in his "*Horæ Paulinæ*," we have a proof that the author of Acts had a thorough knowledge of Paul's movements and circumstances. He is scarcely less faithful and successful in the account he gives of the part played by Peter and Stephen, who represent the types of Christian thought which prevailed before the

doctrinal aspects of the Gospel had been so clearly recognized as they are in Paul's writings. His indication, too, of the change which the resurrection of Jesus made on the attitude of the Pharisees and the Sadducees towards His cause, is another token of his fidelity and independence.

If there be still many things in the narrative which we are unable to verify, we are warranted in trusting the author in such cases, both on account of his acknowledged merit as a historian and because he had excellent opportunities of getting information at first hand, not only from the Apostle Paul (who seems to have been very communicative regarding his personal experiences—II Cor. 1⁸⁻¹⁰; 12¹⁻⁹; Gal. 1 and 2; Phil. 3^{4 ff.}), but from many others who took part in the events which he records. Such were John Mark (to whom Acts 12 may have been largely due; cf. Col. 4¹⁰ and Philemon v. 24); Barnabas (Acts 4³⁶); Philip the evangelist (Acts 21^{8 ff.}); Mnason (Acts 21¹⁶); Silas (Acts 15²²; 16^{19 ff.}); Manaen, the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch (Acts 13¹); and James the Lord's brother (Acts 15¹³; 21¹⁸)—with all of whom Luke had been brought into personal contact.

It has been suggested that the author of Acts had the benefit of other documents; and this may not improbably have been the case, as regards the early part of the narrative. But there is no reason to doubt that Luke was the author of the book as a whole. The minute schemes of partition and redaction associated with the names of Van Manen, Sorof, Spitta, Hilgenfeld, J. Weiss, C. Clemen, and Jüngst have met with little acceptance. In these speculations the Tübingen theory has been reversed, for according to Baur the Book of Acts derived its motive from the second century, whereas according to the newer critics its value lies in the early fragments which have been pieced together by an unskilful redactor. The more elaborate the theories of compilation are, the greater demand they make on our credulity, and it is no wonder that the two critics who have gone farthest in this direction are found accusing each other of excessive ingenuity.

Whatever the author's sources may have been, whether written or oral, he had evidently throughout the whole book a clear and consistent view of the gradual development of the

Church's life under the influence of Christ's Spirit and the guidance of His providence. To trace this course of development, and at the same time to exhibit, in as favourable a light as the truth would permit, the relations of the Church to the Jewish religion on the one hand and the imperial power of Rome on the other, was the main object of the book. The historical perspective is well preserved throughout, and alike in the narration of incidents concerning those who are otherwise known to us, and in the report of their speeches, there is a high degree of verisimilitude.

With regard to the date of composition, there is still considerable divergence of view among those who accept the Lucan authorship, chiefly owing to difference of opinion about the date of the Third Gospel, which was written before Acts, as the preface to the latter implies. Harnack has recently declared that he sees no reason to believe that the Gospel was written after A.D. 70, and he has come to the conclusion that Acts was written at the close of Paul's two years' imprisonment at Rome. Those who date the Gospel after the destruction of Jerusalem generally assign to

Acts a date somewhere between 72 and 81 (e.g. Meyer, B. Weiss, Ramsay, Headlam), and some are disposed to believe that Luke had in view the preparation of a third "treatise" for the completion of his subject. But in reality there is no want of finish in the concluding portion of Acts if it marks the close of Paul's imprisonment as the result of his acquittal. On the other hand, if he had been condemned and had suffered martyrdom (which was very unlikely to be the case, judging from the opinions expressed by Festus and Agrippa (Acts 25 f.)), Luke's silence would have been very disappointing, and unworthy of his character as a historian. As to the date of publication, it seems very improbable that, if he had his travel-document in his possession when he arrived at Rome, and had acquired other materials during Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea and at other times after joining Paul's company, he should have allowed many years to pass before the publication of his book. (Cf. pp. 291 ff.).

Those who hold Luke to be the author, but feel constrained to admit his dependence on Josephus (e.g. Peake), fix on a date a few

years after the publication of Josephus's "Antiquities" (A.D. 93). Those who reject the Lucan authorship generally choose a date somewhere between 100 and 150.

The main question is as to the historical value of the book, and on this point we may quote, in conclusion, the words of two eminent critics who have done more to influence opinion on this subject than any other writers in recent times. Prof. Harnack, in spite of his prejudice against the book on account of the prominence it gives to the miraculous, says: "Judged from almost every possible standpoint of historical criticism, it is a solid, respectable, and in many respects extraordinary work; and its author's courage is also extraordinary—the courage with which he approaches the task of describing the complicated history of a religious movement still in process of most active development." Sir William Ramsay, who began his inquiry, as he tells us, "with the fixed idea that the work was essentially a second century composition," says: "Acts was written by a great historian, a writer who set himself to record the facts as they occurred, a strong partisan, indeed, but

raised above partiality by his perfect confidence that he had only to describe the facts as they occurred, in order to make the truth of Christianity and the honour of Paul apparent."

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL

There is reason to believe that all the thirteen letters in the New Testament which purport to be written by Paul, with the exception of the Pastoral Epistles (I and II Timothy and Titus), were accepted by the Church of the first century as genuine writings of the Apostle. It is certain that the ten Epistles in question were included in the collection of writings accepted, under the name of "Apostolicon," by the Gnostic leader Marcion (about A.D. 140). While he held nearly all of them to have suffered from interpolation in the interests of Judaism, he never raised a doubt, so far as we are aware, of their being substantially the work of Paul. That they were also accepted by his contemporaries may be inferred from the secure position which they occupied in the general estimation of the Church thirty or forty years later, when we find them all included in the Muratorian Canon as Scriptures

read at public worship. It is incredible that they could have owed this position to the favour of such a notorious heretic as Marcion, the "first-born son of Satan," who seceded from the Church in Rome, and set up an organization of his own.

If we may assume that these Epistles were generally acknowledged to be Paul's about A.D. 140, we have only to compare them with the writings of the Apostolic Fathers (from A.D. 95 onwards), as well as with the pseud-epigraphic writings of the same period, to be satisfied that they could not have been the productions of a post-apostolic writer who had recourse to forgery in order to get a favourable hearing from his contemporaries. Carrying our thoughts back to a still earlier period, when original members of the Churches to which the Epistles were addressed were still alive, we can realize how extremely difficult it would have been to palm off upon these Churches, as letters of Paul, writings of which they had never heard before, containing numerous greetings and other personal references, in which any mistake would have been readily detected and been much commented on.

We know that several spurious writings were put forth in Paul's name long after he was dead, but they never obtained currency in the communities to which they were addressed, any acceptance which they met with being confined to places far distant from their avowed destination. This was the case with the Epistles to the Laodiceans and the Alexandrians, and the Third Epistle to the Corinthians.

As regards those Pauline Epistles which were contained in Marcion's "Apostolicon" and found their way into the Canon, any difference in the reception which they met with for a time in different parts of the Church was due not so much to the results of critical investigation as to local interest or doctrinal predilection, an epistle being held in less esteem where it was little known or where its teaching was unpalatable. Marcion professed to subject all of them to critical examination, but he was obsessed with the idea of an irreconcilable antagonism between the Jewish and the Christian religion, and the only result of his labours was to cut out what seemed to him to be interpolations—a kind of criticism which has frequently reappeared in modern times—and

to insert a few words here and there, usually borrowed from some other Epistle, for the purpose of bringing the passage into harmony with his own conception of Paul's teaching. While the text current in Marcion's time cannot be said to have been altogether free from corruption, yet the fact that the writings of an apostle were as a rule highly prized by the Churches to which they were addressed, and were frequently communicated to other Churches, long before any steps were taken to collect them into one volume, renders it extremely improbable that in the course of their history they should have suffered so many serious alterations as Marcion supposed to have taken place.

Though it was not till 1792 that any doubts were raised as to the substantial genuineness of the Epistles attributed to Paul, a few years before (1786) J. S. Semler suggested that the Epistles had been preserved, not in the form in which they were originally written, but as they were adapted for reading in church, and the same writer had anticipated modern critics by his theories of interpolation in the case of Romans 15, 16, and II Corinthians 9 and 12, 13.

The first to call any of the Epistles seriously in question was Evanson, in his work on the Gospels already mentioned (p. 104), in which he rejected Romans, Ephesians, and Colossians, and threw doubt on Titus, Philippians, and Philemon. He was answered in England by Joseph Priestley (1792-3) and a Bampton Lecturer (T. Falconer, 1810), but the controversy on the subject was mainly carried on in Germany. For many years adverse criticism was confined to the Pastoral Epistles, I and II Thessalonians, and Ephesians, led by J. E. C. Schmidt (1798), Eichhorn (1804), Schleiermacher (1807), Usteri (a Swiss theologian, 1824), de Wette (1826), F. C. Baur (1835), and Kern (1839).

In 1845 Baur published his epoch-making "Paulus," in which he aimed at a scientific treatment of the literary and historical questions involved in the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline Epistles. Viewing the development of the early Catholic Church from a Hegelian standpoint, as the product of conflicting forces represented by a Petrine or Jewish-Christian party and a Pauline or Gentile-Christian party, Baur arrived at the conclusion

that the only certainly genuine Epistles of Paul were Galatians, I and II Corinthians, and Romans, which seemed to bear the most distinct traces of the supposed antagonism. He based his acceptance of them, however, on somewhat different grounds when he said: "They bear on themselves so incontestably the character of Pauline originality that it is not possible for critical doubt to be exercised upon them with any show of reason." The rest of the Epistles attributed to Paul he regarded as second-century productions of the Pauline school, designed to reconcile antagonistic forces, and to promote the unity of the Church in opposition to Gnosticism, which threatened its very existence.

A few years later, Bruno Bauer, an anti-supernaturalist, published his "Kritik der Paulinischen Briefe" (1850-2), in which he pronounced all the Pauline Epistles to be, without exception, fabrications of the second century (somewhere between A.D. 130 and 170), their teaching being, in his opinion, for the most part a creation of the Greek mind. Bauer's views were repudiated by the Tübingen school and made little impression at the time.

But what is virtually the same position has been recently adopted by the radical school of Dutch critics,¹ who claim to be the true successors to F. C. Baur, carrying out his principles to their logical and ultimate consequences. They reduce the external evidence to a minimum, rejecting the Ignatian Epistles and bringing Clement of Rome down from A.D. 95 to the middle of the second century.

But the general current of opinion during the last forty years has run in an opposite direction. Even apart from the external evidence, it has been felt that, in several of the Epistles rejected by Baur, the personality of the writer is too strong and vivid, and too true to apostolic times, to have been a creation of the second century ; and, in consequence, there has been a tendency to accept I Thessalonians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and, in some quarters, even II Thessalonians and Ephesians, and the Pastoral Epistles themselves, in addition to those acknowledged by Baur. This

¹ Represented by Pierson, Naber, Loman, Völter, van Manen, and (in a modified form) by Steck of Berne. Prominent among their opponents in Holland were J. H. Scholten (1882) and Baljon (1899), and, in Germany, Heinrici (1886) and M. Brückner (1890).

tendency has been most apparent in Great Britain, where sympathy with the negative views of the Tübingen school has been confined to a small number of writers, represented by S. Davidson and the author of "Supernatural Religion." But even in Germany the traditional views have been maintained by some critics of the first rank, such as Th. Zahn and B. Weiss, and in France by Godet, while the prevailing tendency in both these countries has been to qualify the negations of Baur,¹ which are unreservedly accepted by hardly any of those who inherited the traditions of his school.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO
THE THESSALONIANS

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO THE THESSALONIANS

Proceeding now to the consideration of individual Epistles, we shall begin with I and II Thessalonians, as being probably the earliest extant Epistles of Paul, though there are a number of modern scholars who claim that

¹ So Reuss, Ewald, Bleek, Mangold, Ritschl, Beyschlag, Weizsäcker, Harnack, Holtzmann, Pfeleiderer.

position for Galatians. As regards the external evidence in their favour, we find that by the time of Irenæus (A.D. 185) they were widely and generally accepted as writings of Paul. Forty years earlier, as we have seen, they had a place in Marcion's "Apostolicon," and for half a century before that time, we hear echoes of their language in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. Notwithstanding this testimony in their favour, they have both been called in question in certain quarters.

The earliest writer to throw doubt on I Thessalonians was Schrader, in 1836; and in 1845, as we have seen, it was rejected by Baur. This verdict, however, has not been generally adopted, for the Epistle is accepted by Hilgenfeld, Lipsius, Holtzmann, Weizsäcker, Jülicher, P. Schmidt, Schmiedel, von Soden, and a host of more conservative critics. As McGiffert says: "Its authenticity, denied a couple of generations ago by many scholars, is to-day generally recognized, except by those who deny the genuineness of all the Pauline Epistles" (art. Thessalonians in E. Bi.).

Although in some respects different in character from all the other epistles which bear

Paul's name, I Thessalonians gives us such a vivid representation of the Apostle and his converts, revealing so much tenderness and sympathy and devotion on the one side, and so much simple faith and warm enthusiasm on the other, that we feel it to be in the highest degree improbable that it should have been a fabrication produced after the Apostle's death. Moreover, it is difficult to conceive any motive the writer could have had for his forgery, and, in particular, it seems unlikely that any later writer, personating the Apostle, would have attributed to him the belief that the Second Coming would happen during his life-time, when the expectation had already been falsified by his death, and the Church had become reconciled to the mortality of its members through the prospect of the resurrection. The prominence given to this subject in the Epistle has something corresponding to it in Acts (17³), but it was, no doubt, largely due to the yearning in the hearts of the sorely tried converts for the promised return of their Lord. The manner, too, in which the primitive truths of the Gospel are quietly assumed, without any argument, is what we might have expected,

considering that the greater part of the Epistle (chaps. 1-3) was intended (as is now acknowledged by most critics) to vindicate the character of the Apostle under the attacks made upon him by unbelieving Jews for having left Thessalonica under stress of persecution,¹ while the remainder was designed to afford practical guidance and encouragement to his converts under the trials and temptations to which they were exposed. The letter agrees in the main with the narrative in Acts, but there is no reason to believe that this is the result of design in either case, as the former (3¹⁻⁶) gives an account of Timothy's movements which at first sight seems to be at variance with the history (18¹⁻⁵), and tells (1^{7 f.}, 2⁶⁻¹⁰) of events which must have occupied a longer time than the period which a cursory reader of Acts would

¹Hence Paul's strong condemnation of the Jews in 2^{15 f.} The expression in 2¹⁶ strongly resembles Test. Levi 6¹¹, and is held by Schmiedel to be an interpolation referring to the fall of Jerusalem. But it may be judicial hardening and demoralization that is referred to. According to Zahn, von Soden, and others, the slanderers of the Apostle were not Jews but Gentiles. But, if the latter took part in the calumny, the former were probably the instigators.

imagine the Apostle to have spent at Thessalonica (17¹⁻¹⁰).¹

While there is now general agreement among scholars as to the genuineness of I Thessalonians the same can hardly be said of the Second Epistle, although it has stronger external evidence in its favour, including the apparent use of it by Polycarp.

Doubts were first raised in 1801, by J. E. C. Schmidt, who finally rejected the Epistle altogether. In 1839 Kern suggested that the apocalyptic passage in 2¹⁻¹² was the work of a Paulinist, about 70-80 A.D., whose language is to be interpreted in the light of the historic situation, and that he compiled almost all the rest of the Epistle from I Thessalonians, as a setting for his eschatology. This view has been adopted, with various modifications of date and historic reference, by Baur, Weizsäcker, Pfeiderer, Schmiedel, Holtzmann, Wrede, Hollmann, von Soden, Weinel, and others; while Hausrath, on the other hand, holds the passage in question to be the genuine apostolic nucleus of the Epistle.

¹ Cf. Philippians 4¹⁶ (on which see Frame on Thessalonians, I.C.C., pp. 120 f.).

The genuineness of the Epistle, as a whole, has been maintained by a still greater number of scholars, including Lünemann, Lightfoot, Jülicher, Bornemann, Briggs, Zahn, B. Weiss, Wendt, Charles, Vincent, Bacon, Askwith, Wohlenberg, Lock, Findlay, Clemen, Vischer, Wernle, Sabatier, Heinrici, Milligan, Bousset, Drummond, von Dobschütz, Harnack,¹ Knowling, Moffatt, Deissmann, Feine.

The two points on which the controversy has mainly turned have been : (1) the close dependence of II Thessalonians on the First Epistle, both as regards arrangement and language, and (2) its strange eschatology.

(1) The literary dependence referred to is certainly very remarkable, but it is as difficult to account for it on any theory of forgery as when we attribute the composition of both letters to the Apostle with the assistance of Silas and Timothy. The difficulty arises from the fact that while, as Jülicher says, "on the

¹ Harnack supposes the Epistle to have been addressed to the Jewish Christians at Thessalonica (to whom he finds an allusion in a various reading of 2¹³—ἀπαρχήν, "first-fruits," instead of ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, "from the beginning"); while the First was sent, perhaps a day or two before, to the Gentile members, forming the main body of the Church.

whole the style is so thoroughly Pauline that we might indeed admire the forger who could imitate it so ingeniously," there is sometimes so close a parallelism between the two Epistles as to suggest that the author must have had the First Epistle before him when he wrote the Second. There is indeed nothing improbable in the supposition that Paul may have retained a rough draft of the former letter, and even if we assume that his chief object in again writing to the Thessalonians was to correct their misapprehensions about the Second Coming of the Lord, he might quite well take the opportunity of reverting to other topics on which they still required encouragement and exhortation, especially if the First Epistle had not been received with so much deference as it ought to have been (I. 5²⁷ ; II. 3¹⁴).¹ In this light the Second Epistle may almost be regarded as a revised edition of the First, with the omission of the first two or three chapters, which were no longer needed to vindicate the personal character and conduct of the Apostle in rela-

¹ There are also expressions in the Epistle which favour the supposition that the Apostle was replying to a letter he had received from Thessalonica in answer to his First Epistle (1^{3, 11} ; 3¹⁻⁵).

tion to his converts. It may have been owing to the readjustment thus rendered necessary (whether it fell to the Apostle himself or to one of his companions acting as his amanuensis or secretary; Rom. 16²², I Cor. 16²¹, Col. 4¹⁸, II Thess. 3¹⁷), that the Second Epistle is less smooth and flowing than the First. If it is at the same time more severe in tone, this may have been due partly to the fact that the state of the Church in Thessalonica was now less satisfactory (II. 3) than when Timothy brought back the good news of the faith and patience of its members, and partly to the grievous trials which beset the Apostle in Corinth, at the hands of the Jews, about the time when the Second Epistle would be written (Acts 18^{5 ff.}).

(2) As regards the second and more serious objection taken to the Epistle on account of its strange eschatology, recent researches by Gunkel, Bousset, and Charles have shown that the mysterious passage in question (2¹⁻¹²) can have nothing to do with the growth of Gnostic error, and is not to be explained either by the Neronic legend (*Nero-redivivus*),¹ as sug-

¹ "The man of sin" has also been identified with such different characters as Caligula, Mahomet, the Pope,

gested by Kern, or by derivation from the Book of Revelation (chap. 13)—where the Roman Empire stands for all that is evil. The real origin of the passage is to be found partly in the apocalyptic teaching in the Book of Daniel (11³⁶ f.—referring to the character and career of Antiochus Epiphanes) and other Jewish writings, partly in the new ideas of “the last times” current in the early Church, in which “prophecy” had an important place, Silas being himself a prophet (Acts 15³²). It contains a veiled expression of the thoughts which Paul and his company had been led to entertain on a subject of supreme importance, on which Jesus himself had uttered many solemn warnings (Matt. 24), and on which the Apostle John was yet to testify, though in a somewhat different sense (Rev. 1, 2¹⁸, 4¹⁻³ etc.). It was a subject confessedly mysterious, but Paul was bound to recur to it, in view of the intense interest it had excited among the Thessalonians,

Luther, Napoleon; while “the one that restraineth” has been supposed by some to refer to the German Empire, to Claudius, or even to Paul himself, though it is now generally understood to refer to the Roman Government, which had not yet begun to persecute the Christians.

and the misapprehensions and abuses to which it was liable. In the present utterance, which would be very difficult to account for if it stood alone as the invention of a forger, but may have been more intelligible to the Thessalonians owing to the previous instruction they had received on the subject (2⁵), we can trace the Apostle's reverence for Roman law and order ("that which restraineth," v. 6), as well as his despair of the Jewish Church (v. 3), whose rulers were now filled with a fanatical hatred of the Gospel and its preachers. It was this aspect of Judaism that had recently forced itself on his attention in Thessalonica, Berea, and Corinth (Acts 17^{5, 13}, 18⁶, I Thess. 2¹⁴⁻¹⁶, II. 3^{1 f.}). And when he pictures the great enemy of Christianity as "the man of sin" who was to sit in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God, whose coming was to be with all power and signs and lying wonders, he conceives of him as the last and mightiest representative of Jewish unbelief, whose ascendancy would be a signal for the return of the Lord in overwhelming power and glory.¹

¹ It is characteristic of apocalyptic literature that it takes its cue from the signs of the time in which it is pro-

In these circumstances, the absence from the Epistle of any reference to the controversies about the observance of the Jewish law, which had agitated the Churches of Syria and Asia Minor through the influence of Jewish Christians, may be regarded as a token of genuineness in the case of an Epistle addressed to Macedonian Christians, who had been fiercely persecuted by the unconverted Jews.

As regards the relation between the prophecy in this Epistle concerning the Second Coming and that in I Thessalonians, it has often been pointed out that there is no inconsistency between the idea that the great event would take place suddenly and the belief that it would be preceded by certain signs. The two ideas are combined in our Lord's great *duces*. Hence, a few years after this Epistle was written, when Christianity was proving too strong for its Jewish adversaries, we find Paul looking forward to a complete restoration of Israel (Rom. 11²⁶). At a later period, when imperial persecution of the Christians and the deification of the Emperor had set in, Rome appears as the embodiment of evil in the Apocalypse of John; while still later in his Epistles the same Apostle finds the spirit of Antichrist in those who deny the reality of the Incarnation (I John 2¹⁸, 4¹⁻³).

prophecy on the subject (Matt. 24^{29 ff.}), where the lesson is to watch, and, as Baur himself admitted, either idea might be fitly emphasized at the proper time.

With regard to some slight variations of expression in the two Epistles, and the unusual emphasis laid by the Apostle on his signature as a token of genuineness (3¹⁷), they may be viewed in such a way as to tell rather against the supposition of forgery than for it. The same may be said of the allusion to possible deception by letter or otherwise, as the suggestion was one which a forger would hardly have cared to make, though it was natural enough for the Apostle to speak about his correspondence as he does in these Epistles, if he was only now beginning to employ this method of communicating with his converts.

A suggestion was made by Grotius long ago, which commended itself to a number of notable critics, including Ewald and Renan, that the explanation of certain expressions and allusions in I Thessalonians was to be found in the fact that it was really of a later date than the so-called II Thessalonians. But it is now generally felt that there is no sufficient reason to

reverse the traditional order of the two letters, which can be traced back to the time of Marcion, and has considerable internal evidence in its favour.¹

A recent writer (R. Scott, 1911) considers that the Epistles are made up of two documents drawn up by Timothy and Silas respectively, the former being the author of I. 1-3, and II. 3, the latter of I. 4, 5 and II. 1, 2, the whole having been completed and edited by Timothy between A.D. 70 and 80. Spitta, on the other hand, attributes the whole of II Thessalonians, except 3^{17 f.}, to Timothy, whom he holds to be the speaker in 2⁵—although, in a few other passages in which the singular pronoun is employed

¹ E.g., I. 5²⁷ throws light on II. 2¹⁵ and 3^{14, 17}, as I. 4¹³⁻¹⁸ does on II. 2¹. Again II. 3^{6 ff.} indicates the increasing gravity of the situation as compared with I. 4^{11 f.}; while I. 2¹⁷ and II. 1^{3 f.} show progress and improvement. Moreover, I. 2¹⁷ and 3⁶ seem to exclude the supposition of the Apostle's having had any communication with Thessalonica since his first visit, except through Timothy on the occasion referred to. It is possible Timothy may then have brought back a letter with him from Thessalonica, which, if we had it, would explain many of the expressions in the First Epistle. Dr. Rendel Harris has actually attempted to reproduce such a letter, though there is no evidence of its ever having existed (Exp. V, viii. pp. 16 ff.).

(I. 3⁵, 5²⁷; II. 3¹⁷), the words are evidently Paul's. But while the partnership of Timothy and Silas with Paul in these two Epistles, and the influence they may have exerted as amanuenses, are not to be overlooked, the Pauline characteristics of many passages are so apparent, both in thought and feeling, as to put out of court such ingenious theories as those we have just mentioned.

As regards date and place of composition, it follows from what has been already said that both Epistles were written from Corinth when Paul was residing there along with Silas and Timothy. From an inscription recently discovered at Delphi (Deissmann's "Paul," Appendix I) it appears that Gallio entered on his office as proconsul of Achaia (Acts 18¹²) in mid-summer of A.D. 51, and as Paul had already been eighteen months in Corinth before that time, and the First Epistle appears to have been written soon after his arrival, we may with great probability assign it to the early spring of 50, and put the Second Epistle a month or two later.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

This is one of the Epistles which the Tübingen school admitted to be the work of Paul. Its

genuineness has been questioned by very few critics, and by none of great repute. To most scholars, indeed, the idea that such a fervent outpouring of heart and mind could have been produced by an unknown writer in the second century seems too improbable to require refutation. As Moffatt says ("I.L.N.T.," p. 107): "The hypothesis is no longer anything but a curiosity of criticism, like Père Jean Hardouin's relegation of most of the classics to the fourteenth century and Edwin Johnson's discovery that the primitive Christian literature was forged in the Renaissance and Reformation periods."

But while there is no reason to doubt that the letter was written by Paul, the precise date of its composition and the geographical situation of the Churches to which it was addressed, are questions which have given rise to a voluminous literature, in the form both of books and articles. The two questions are closely connected, but it is the destination of the Epistle that has excited the keenest interest and the fullest controversy.

According to most New Testament critics of the last century and a few of a more recent

date, such as Chase, Wendt, Schmiedel, Jülicher, Moffatt, von Dobschütz, Deissmann, Feine, the letter was intended for Churches planted by Paul in North Galatia during his second missionary journey (Acts 16⁶) and revisited by him in his third journey (Acts 18²³). But an increasing number of scholars, including Renan, Sabatier, Hausrath, Weizsäcker, Pfeiderer, Zahn, von Soden, Ramsay, Sanday, Rendall, McGiffert, Bacon, Askwith, regard the letter as sent to the Churches of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, which were planted by Paul during his first missionary journey (Acts 13¹⁴ - 14²³) and were revisited by him in his second journey (Acts 16¹⁻⁵). It is now a well-established fact, for which we are largely indebted to the researches and writings of Sir William Ramsay, that the four cities just mentioned lay within the Roman province of Galatia, defined in A.D. 25, which extended much farther south than the district previously known as Galatia. Two of these cities, Iconium and Antioch, lay in a part of the country which was originally Phrygian, and the other two, Lystra and Derbe, in a district which was previously Lycaonian. The inhabi-

tants of all alike, as subjects of the Roman Empire, were entitled to be called Galatians, and this designation was not only technically correct, but also respectful to them and in harmony with the Apostle's taste for imperial nomenclature (cf. "Asia" in I Cor. 16¹⁹, "Achaia" and "Macedonia" in Romans 15²⁶ and I Cor. 16⁵, "Galatia" in I Cor. 16¹). Luke's usage in Acts is different, but in neither of the two passages which are alleged to refer to the province of Galatia in its older and narrower sense is the term "Galatia" used. In the one case, the expression employed is "the Phrygian and Galatic region" (16⁶), in the other, "the Galatic region and Phrygia" (18²³), both of which can be interpreted without any reference to North Galatia. In the latter passage the Apostle is stated to have gone through all the region in order, establishing all the disciples, but on the former occasion, when he is alleged to have evangelized the cities of North Galatia, there is no mention of his having preached—to which we may add that nowhere in the first century have we any evidence of the existence of Christian communities in the part of Galatia referred to. It is also strange that

in the Epistle (2⁵) Paul should tell his Galatian converts that in contending for spiritual freedom at the Jerusalem conference he had had their interests in view, if at that time they had never even heard the Gospel, as must have been the case if Paul's earliest visit to them is that recorded in Acts 16⁶. This is an objection which holds good whether the conference, mentioned in Galatians, is to be identified with Acts 11³⁰ or Acts 15.

Another point is that the allusion which the Apostle makes to "an infirmity of the flesh," as the cause or occasion of his preaching the Gospel to them at the first (Gal. 4¹³), is difficult to reconcile with his undertaking the long and toilsome journey to North Galatia, if he had no intention of engaging in missionary labour there. It was not a place to which he would have been likely to resort for health, whereas the removal from the malarious region of Pamphylia to the high lands of Pisidia would be quite intelligible from that point of view.¹

¹ But T. W. Crafer (*Expositor*, October, 1913) suggests that in Gal. 4¹³ the Apostle may be referring to serious injury done to his health by the stoning at Lystra, rendering him for a time unfit to travel, and marring his appearance.

Moreover, if he did go to the cities of North Galatia, it is difficult to see how by such a route he should have "come over against Mysia" when he "assayed to go into Bithynia" (Acts 16⁷).

On the other hand, there are several considerations, besides the argument from the imperial sympathies of the Apostle, that may be adduced in support of the South Galatian theory. If the name "Galatians" does not apply to the Christians of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, they are left without any place in Paul's correspondence, except in II Tim. 3¹¹, where there is a reference to the persecutions which the Apostle had suffered in their neighbourhood; and they can have taken no part in the collections made in Achaia and Macedonia (II Cor. 9^{1 f.}) and among "the Churches of Galatia" (I Cor. 16¹) for the poor saints at Jerusalem (Rom. 15²⁶). This would be the more surprising as "Gaius of Derbe" and "Timothy of Lystra" are mentioned as among the deputies who had accompanied Paul on the way to Jerusalem to present the joint offering, while we look in vain for any representatives of North Galatia

among them (Acts 20⁴). Again, if the Epistle was addressed to the Christians in the four cities referred to, we can see in the Apostle's words in Galatians 6¹⁷ :—" From henceforth let no man trouble me : for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus "—a reference to the serious injuries he received "at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra" (II Tim. 3¹¹) ; while the repeated allusions to Barnabas in the Epistle, especially the statement that " even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation" (2¹³), acquire a special force and meaning if he had been Paul's coadjutor in preaching the Gospel to these Churches (Gal. 2^{1, 9, 13} ; Acts 13¹⁴). To this we may add that the striking language of the Apostle regarding the enthusiastic reception he had met with from the Galatians, when he first appeared among them as the herald of the cross (Gal. 4¹⁴), corresponds well to what is recorded in Acts 14¹¹⁻²⁸, and especially to the cry of the people at Lystra : " The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men," when " they called Barnabas, Jupiter ; and Paul, Mercury " ; while the charge of inconsistency brought against the Apostle, as implied in Galatians 5¹¹, finds an apparent

justification in his circumcision of Timothy "because of the Jews" (Acts 16¹⁻³).

Such are the main reasons which have led the majority of recent critics and commentators to adopt the South Galatian theory.

The determination of the date and place of composition is an even more difficult question, on which many different views are held. The difficulty is aggravated by the fact that there is a difference of opinion as to the Apostle's visit to Jerusalem referred to in Galatians 2^{1 ff.}, some scholars holding, with Ramsay, that it is the visit recorded in Acts 11³⁰, while the greater number adhere to the old view that the Apostle is referring to what took place at the Council of Jerusalem, of which an account is given in Acts 15. But whichever of these two opinions is correct, we have a more sure indication of time in the fact that the Epistle is written throughout in the name of Paul alone, the only use of the plural being in 1^{8 ff.}, where he is reminding his converts of the way in which the Gospel was first preached among them. From this we may safely infer that it was not written till after the separation between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15³⁶⁻⁴⁰), in

which case it was posterior to the Council of Jerusalem. A number of recent critics (Weber, Bartlet, McGiffert) agree with Calvin and Beza in dating it from Antioch immediately after that event, but this view is only tenable if we identify the Apostle's second visit to the Galatian Churches, implied in Galatians 4¹³ (*τὸ πρότερον*), with his renewed intercourse with them during his first missionary journey, when "they returned (from Derbe) to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch." Besides, it is hardly likely that Paul would have sent a letter when he was about to visit the Churches in person (Acts 15³⁶). This objection applies also in some measure to the suggestion of Renan and Ramsay that the Epistle may have been sent from Antioch in the interval between the second and third missionary journeys. On the whole, the probability seems to be either that it was written in the course of the second tour (49-52 A.D.), after the visit to the Galatians recorded in Acts 16⁶, from Macedonia (Hausrath), or Athens (Clemen), or Corinth (Zahn, Bacon, Rendall), or else during the third tour (52-56), after the visit mentioned in Acts 18²³. Such a com-

paratively late date is necessarily assigned to it by those who adhere to the North Galatian theory, the general opinion among them being that it was written at an early period in Paul's long residence at Ephesus (say A.D. 53), while some (e.g. Lightfoot) put it after the close of that visit (55), when the Apostle was passing through Macedonia or Greece (Acts 20²), which would explain the unusual form of salutation from "all the brethren which are with me" (Gal. 1²). There is no inconsistency in supposing that such a long time had elapsed since his last visit to Galatia, if we take the expression in Galatians 1⁶, namely "so soon" (R.V. "so quickly"), as referring simply to the rapidity and suddenness of the change which (as the Apostle has just learned) had come over their sentiments. Such a late date also admits of the Epistle being placed between II Corinthians and Romans, to both of which it bears a strong resemblance—to the former in general tone, to the latter in its mode of reasoning and its form of expression. This is an argument, however, which should not be pressed too far, as we can hardly suppose that Paul's teaching in his successive Epistles depended on

the development of his own theological views rather than on the needs of those to whom he was writing. According to Clemen, Galatians was composed after Romans, not before it.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

This is an epistle whose genuineness has been admitted, with practical unanimity, for the last eighteen centuries and more. It is the first of the New Testament writings that is expressly referred to in early Christian literature, being quoted by name in the Epistle of Clement, which was likewise addressed to the Church at Corinth (*c.* A.D. 95). Within thirty or forty years afterwards we find unmistakable allusions to it in the writings of Polycarp (*cf.* his Epistle to Phil., chap. 11², and I Cor. 6²), and of Ignatius (whose letters are deeply imbued with it), as well as of the Gnostic leader Basilides.

Although it has come down to us under the title of I Corinthians, it was evidently preceded by another letter from Paul to the same Church (I Cor. 5⁹), warning members to beware of associating with persons guilty of

immorality. Partly it was occasioned by unfavourable reports which reached the Apostle during his residence at Ephesus through members "of the household of Chloe," who had means of communication between Corinth and Ephesus (I Cor. 1¹¹), partly it was an answer to a letter of inquiry sent to the Apostle by the Corinthian Church, apparently by the hands of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (7¹, 16^{17 f.}). It affords a better indication of the problems confronting the early Church than any other Epistle in the New Testament.

Those who question its genuineness form an insignificant minority, beginning with Bruno Bauer in the middle of last century (whose critical standpoint was determined by his philosophy of Church History), and represented in more recent times by the destructive Dutch critics, Loman, Pierson, Naber, van Manen, and Meyboom, as well as by Steck of Berne, who hold the Epistle to be a conglomerate of the second century, made up of fragments of Jewish and Christian literature, and emanating from Syria or Asia Minor. The arguments they adduce are extremely arbitrary, and are

frequently at variance with the most surely established results of criticism, especially as regards the testimony afforded by the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. The theory they advance involves so many improbabilities, and is based on so many fanciful conjectures, as to make little impression on a candid and sober judgment; and things which to the ordinary reader seem natural enough, such as the acquaintance with the life and teaching of Jesus Christ which the writer shows, are held to be symptoms of production at a later period when the Gospels were in general circulation. In striking contrast to such precarious arguments we may refer to Paley's cogent reasoning in this connexion in his "Horæ Paulinæ."

With regard to the date of the Epistle, there is general agreement that it was written from Ephesus in the spring of the last year that Paul spent in that city (say A.D. 55), though Ramsay and Godet would put it half a year, and Kennedy and Jülicher a year, earlier, so as to afford a sufficient interval between I and II Corinthians (I. 16^{3 ff.}, 5⁶⁻⁸, Acts 19^{21 f.}, 20^{1 ff.}; cf. p. 264, note 1).

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE
CORINTHIANS

This epistle does not seem to have been so well known in the early Church as I Corinthians, probably because it was not felt to be of so much value and importance either to those who received it or to the Church at large; and hence the external evidence in its favour is much less abundant. Notwithstanding this, however, it has been accepted by the scholars of Christendom with almost as much unanimity as the other, owing to its internal character being sufficient of itself to forbid the supposition of forgery, and to accredit it as a genuine utterance of the heart and mind of Paul.

The case is different as regards its integrity, which was first called in question by Semler in 1767, followed by Weber in 1798 and Hausrath in 1870; and of late the question has been keenly debated in this country and America, as well as on the continent of Europe. There is such a difference between the relieved and grateful feeling which pervades the earlier and larger part of the Epistle, and the indignation which flashes out so often towards its

close, that the majority of recent critics (e.g. Holtzmann, Pfeiderer, Krenkel, Schmiedel, McGiffert, Clemen, von Soden, Peake, Rendall, Moffatt, Bacon, Lake, Kennedy) are disposed to adopt the view suggested by Hausrath that chaps. 10-13 ¹⁰ (the "Vierkapitelbrief") is an interpolation, being in reality the letter, or rather part of the letter, referred to in chaps. 2 and 7, regarding whose effect upon his converts Paul had been so painfully anxious, until Titus brought the good news which filled his heart with gratitude and joy (2 ¹² ff., 7 ⁶ f.). The four chapters in question are much more severe in their tone than I Corinthians, and answer much better to the description of the previous letter which is given in II Corinthians 2, a letter written, as the Apostle says: "out of much affliction and anguish of heart, with many tears"; whereas, if they are regarded as an integral part of II Corinthians, it is very difficult to understand how the Apostle should have changed his tone so suddenly at the beginning of chap. 10 without any apparent cause. Moreover, as Kennedy and others have shown, a good case can be made out for the priority of 10-13 ¹⁰ to the preceding part of the Epistle,

by a careful comparison of the following passages: 2³ and 13¹⁰; 1²³ and 13²; 2⁹, 7¹⁵ f., and 10⁶; 3¹, 5¹², and 10-13¹⁰; 1²³, 2¹, and 12¹⁴, 13². To this we may add that the confident appeal for contributions of money in chaps. 8 and 9 would come with a better grace after a reconciliation had been effected, than in the course of a letter containing such invective as we find in chaps. 10-13.

That the foregoing theory is not free from objections has been shown by those who identify the severe letter referred to in chapter 2 with I Corinthians (Sanday, Bernard, Denney, Bleek, Weiss, Zahn, and others), as well as by those who hold it to have been lost (Klöpffer, Jülicher, Weizsäcker, Holsten, Bousset, Findlay, Robertson, Lietzmann). The former think that II Corinthians can be sufficiently explained by reference to the state of things disclosed in I Corinthians, but the majority of modern expositors, while differing somewhat as to the precise order of events and the nature of the offence which provoked the Apostle's anger, hold that II Corinthians is unintelligible unless we take into account an intermediate letter to the Corinthians conveyed

to them by Titus (2¹³, 7^{6, 13, 14}), as well as the second visit of Paul to that city (12¹⁴, 13¹, 2¹), and the visits and reports of Timothy (I Cor. 16¹⁰, II Cor. 1¹) and of Titus (II Cor. 12¹⁸, 8¹⁶⁻²⁴). Few now hold with Holtzmann (see H.D.B., I, p. 492) that the case of incest mentioned in I Corinthians 5 was still the subject of dispute in II Corinthians, the general opinion being that some fresh trouble had arisen deeply affecting the Apostle personally, through some gross insult which had been offered to himself or to one of his coadjutors, probably Timothy (I Cor. 16^{10 f.}, II Cor. 1). This is the view taken by Bleek, Olshausen, Neander, Ewald, Hilgenfeld, Weizsäcker, Jülicher, Godet, Clemen, and Robertson, while Krenkel supposes a bitter quarrel to have taken place between two members of the Corinthian Church (II Cor. 7¹²). According to this view, II Corinthians must have been written after ample reparation had been offered to the Apostle and his authority had been fully restored, but while he was still suffering from the recollection of the cruel and ungrateful treatment to which he had been subjected.

Another passage in the Epistle is reckoned by

many to be an interpolation, namely, 6¹⁴ - 7¹. It breaks the connexion between 6¹³ and 7², and it is held by a considerable number of recent writers to be part of the early epistle referred to by Paul in I Corinthians 5⁹⁻¹³ (J. Weiss, Hilgenfeld, Sabatier, von Dobschütz, von Soden, Franke, Bacon, Clemen, Whitelaw).¹ This seems not improbable, but there is nothing in the history or condition of the text, or in the tradition of the Church, to bear out the supposition. In any case there is no sufficient reason to doubt (as R. Scott and a few German critics do) that the verses in question were written by Paul.

The same may be said with still greater confidence regarding chapter 9, which Semler thought to be a separate letter sent to the Christians of Achaia—a conjecture which has little to support it and has not found much favour with modern critics.

There is reason to believe that the Epistle was written by Paul (Timothy being associated with him in the opening salutation) in the autumn of A.D. 55, from some place in

¹ It has been pointed out that a similar conjunction of two different letters has taken place in the transmission of Cicero's correspondence.

Macedonia, soon after he was joined by Titus bringing news of the great change for the better in the state of the Church at Corinth. It was sent to Corinth by the hands of Titus and two others (8¹⁶⁻²⁴), one of whom is generally identified with Luke (who was a brother of Titus, according to Prof. Souter)—a commission being at the same time given them to see to the completion of the collection for the poor at Jerusalem, with the inception of which they had already been connected during the previous year (8⁶⁻¹¹, 9², 12^{17 f.}).¹

Note.—There are two short apocryphal letters, one from the Corinthians to Paul, the other from Paul to the Corinthians, which formed part of the Armenian Canon, and are found in two Latin manuscripts and in a Coptic version of the Acts of Paul. The original was probably written in Old Syriac towards the end of the second century, in the course of the struggle against Gnosticism, especially as represented by the school of Bardesanes.

¹ ἀπὸ πέρυσσι (8¹⁰, 9²) should be translated "last year," not "a year ago" (A.V.). This affects the date of the Epistle, if we assume that it was not written before October, when the Macedonian and Jewish New Year had already begun.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE ROMANS

Like the other Epistles of Paul accepted by the Tübingen school, Romans has been called in question by the extreme Dutch critics and a few others, who hold it to be a compilation by a Paulinist at the end of the first or the beginning of the second century. They attach no importance to the external evidence in its favour prior to Marcion¹ (who is the first writer to refer to the Epistle by name as the work of Paul), and base their rejection of it on the signs which they think they can detect in it of a composite and post-apostolic origin.²

Among the host of critics who have adopted the traditional view that it was written by Paul, there has been an immense amount of

¹ In the writings of Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Aristides, Basilides, etc.—to which we may add I Peter, whose resemblance to Romans in thought and diction is so marked as to give the impression that its author must have been acquainted with this Epistle. The same may be said to some extent of Hebrews and possibly also of James.

² See van Manen's art. ROMANS in E. Bi. Vol. IV—also an article on the subject by an American follower, W. B. Smith, in the "Hibbert Journal" for January, 1903, and the reply to it by Schmiedel in the April number.

somewhat fruitless controversy (for which F. C. Baur and his followers are mainly responsible) with regard to the origin and nationality of the Christian community at Rome, and as to the precise object the Apostle had in view in sending to Rome such an elaborate theological statement. The results of the inquiry have not been at all adequate to the labour expended on it, and we have still to be content with a general view of the situation. There is no reason to doubt that there were both Jewish and Gentile Christians at Rome, and nothing could have been more characteristic of Paul, the Roman citizen and the Apostle of the Gentiles, than to preface his visit to the seat of empire with an epistle such as this, fitted to vindicate his authority as an apostle, and at the same time to exhibit the religion of the cross in its true relations both to the Jewish faith, which was strongly represented in the metropolis, and to the pagan religions, which were also to be found there with their attendant idolatry and immorality. He had now reached the culminating point in his career, and in this communication we have the ripest fruit of his philosophy as a Christian

and his experience as an apostle, providing for the needs of a Church that was destined to take a leading place in Christendom, and laying a sure foundation, intellectually and spiritually, for a fresh missionary campaign in the West.

As regards authorship, the only serious difference of opinion has had reference to the integrity of the Epistle in its present form. Owing to a variety of circumstances¹ the two last chapters have been regarded in many quarters with suspicion, and a number of critics with a taste for literary dissection have, as the result of a microscopic examination of the text, advocated the omission or re-arrangement of some of the earlier passages, while some of them have even thought they could trace in it a conjunction of two different

¹ The doxology in 16²⁵ ff. of our text—which is in itself somewhat peculiar—is found in some manuscripts at the end of chapter 14, in others at both these places, and in others at neither. The benediction is in some manuscripts found between verse 23 and verse 25 of chapter 16 instead of at verse 20. The manuscript G, both in Greek and Latin, omits “in Rome” at verse 7 and verse 15 of chapter 1. Moreover, there is reason to believe that some manuscripts as early as the second century omitted chapters 15 and 16 altogether.

epistles. In this way countless theories¹ have been advanced to account for all the phenomena presented by the Epistle, but much of the evidence on which they are founded is of so elusive and uncertain a character that no reliable conclusion can be drawn from it, the result being that up to the present time opinion is hopelessly divided. This is especially the case as regards the question whether the shorter recension, consisting of chaps. 1-14 (with the addition of the doxology, 16²⁵ ff.), which is known to have existed as early as the second century, originated with Marcion, or was drawn up by Paul himself for the purpose of being despatched to a number of Churches.

Equally uncertain is the idea suggested by Keggermann in 1767, revived by Schultz in 1829, and now adopted by many, that most of the sixteenth chapter, with its long list of salutations and its recommendation of Phœbe (who appears to have been the bearer of the

¹ Associated with the names of Neumann, Semler, Eichhorn, Baur, C. H. Weisse, Laurent, Renan, Straatman, Volkmar, Scholten, Spitta, Völter, Lightfoot, Hort, Zahn, Gifford, and others.

letter), was intended for the Church at Ephesus. The appearance of so many greetings in a letter addressed to the Christians of a place which Paul had never visited seems strange; but when we remember that the Apostle is usually very sparing in singling out individuals for special mention, when he is writing to a Church whose membership is well known to him, the occurrence of so many names in this instance may be due to the fact that Paul mentions every person of his acquaintance who had been drawn to the metropolis from the great centres of population in the East in which he had laboured. Possibly it had been largely through their influence that Christianity was propagated at Rome, and, if so, nothing could have been more natural than for the Apostle to seek to enlist their interest in his intended visit to the capital, and to associate them with the Epistle which he was now sending to the community of which they formed part.

The greetings sent to Prisca and Aquila, and to Epænetus "the firstfruits of Asia" (16³ ff.), seem at first sight to favour the suggestion that Ephesus may have been the destination

of the Epistle, but it has been shown by Lightfoot, followed by Sanday and Headlam, that a careful examination of the names in chapter 16 is, on the whole, more favourable to Rome than to any other city. Even as regards Prisca and Aquila, their previous residence at Rome (Acts 18²), as well as their migration from Corinth to Ephesus in connexion with Paul's missionary labours (Acts 18^{18 ff.}), render it not improbable that they had returned to Rome, partly for commercial purposes, and partly for the furtherance of the Gospel.

With regard to the date, place, and occasion of the Epistle, there is no room for doubt, if we regard the Book of Acts as a trustworthy record, and accept Romans, with I and II Corinthians, as written by Paul. It was evidently sent from Corinth during the three months which Paul spent in that city¹ (at the end of 55 or the beginning of 56 A.D.), when he was about to proceed to Jerusalem with the offering from the Churches of Macedonia and Achaia for the relief of the poor brethren in that city, and it was intended to pave the

¹ Acts 20¹⁻⁴, Romans 15^{30 ff.}, 16^{1, 21, 23}, I Corinthians 1¹⁴, II Timothy 4²⁰.

way for his intended visit to the Christians at Rome.¹

THE EPISTLES OF THE IMPRISONMENT.

These are Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians (Col. 4^{3, 18}; Philemon v. 9, 10, 13; Eph. 3¹, 4¹; Phil. 1^{7, 13, 14, 17}; cf. Acts 28¹⁶⁻²⁰). There has been a difference of opinion as to whether they were written during Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea (56-58) or at Rome (58-60). A number of eminent critics² have decided for Cæsarea, especially as regards Colossians, Philemon, and (in some cases) Ephesians, but the prevailing opinion is in

¹ Acts 19²¹, 23¹¹, 24¹⁷, Romans 1⁸⁻¹⁵, 15^{22 f.}, I Corinthians 16^{1 ff.}, II Corinthians 8^{1 ff.}, 9^{1 ff.}. In this connexion chapter II of Paley's "Horæ Paulinæ" is worthy of study. It is remarkable that van Manen, in the article above referred to, repeats the erroneous statement of Evanson (1792) that there is no reference in the Book of Acts to Paul's intended visit to Rome. It is worthy of note that the Apostle's experience at Rome, as recorded in Acts 28, was so very different from what he had expected (Rom. 15²⁴) that we cannot suspect either Acts or Romans to have borrowed from the other. Neither is there anything in the Book of Acts to suggest any thought of the intended visit to Spain, of which we read in Romans 15²⁴.

² E.g. Paulus, D. Schultz, Reuss, Schenkel, Hausrath, Hilgenfeld, Laurent, B. Weiss, Haupt-Meyer.

favour of Rome, and, as regards Philippians in particular, it is now generally acknowledged that internal evidence proves conclusively that it emanated from the imperial city.¹

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON

Nowhere is the conservative tendency of modern criticism more evident than in the case of Philemon and Colossians. Baur's rejection of the short Epistle to Philemon was almost entirely due to its close connexion with Colossians and, through it, with Ephesians. He tried to explain it away as "the embryo of a

¹ (1) Rome was a much more likely place than Cæsarea for a runaway slave like Onesimus to seek refuge in (Philemon vv. 10 ff.). (2) "The whole prætorian guard," and "Cæsar's household," point to the Roman capital, (Phil. 1¹³, 4²²). (3) Both Colossians and Philippians are written in the name of Paul and Timothy, but there is no mention of Timothy in the account of the Cæsarean imprisonment in the Book of Acts. (4) "Philip the evangelist" had entertained Paul and his companions "for many days" in his house in Cæsarea (Acts 21⁸ ff.), yet he is never mentioned in any of these four Epistles. (5) Paul's expectation to visit the Philippians "shortly" (Phil. 2²⁴), if he wrote from Cæsarea, would not be in harmony with the intention he had already formed to visit Rome (Acts 19²¹), especially if he had made up his mind to appeal unto Cæsar.

Christian romance," like the "Clementine Recognitions" of the second or third century. Weizsäcker held it to be an allegorical composition that was never intended to be taken literally, and in proof of this he pointed to the metaphorical character of the name *Onesimus* ("Profitable")—an argument which has been met by the recent discovery of the name in a papyrus dated A.D. 81, and of another slave's name with a similar meaning, *Chresimus* ("Useful")—in another papyrus. To this we may add that if the story was meant to be an allegory it would be apt to fail of its purpose, because it leaves the reader in doubt as to the liberation of the slave. According to Steck, our Epistle is an imitation, by a writer towards the middle of the second century, of a letter written to a friend by the younger Pliny on a somewhat similar occasion, about A.D. 135-140. The resemblance had been pointed out by Grotius long ago, but it lies mainly on the surface, for in some respects the two writers take quite a different attitude towards the offending slave. Even if it were at all likely that a Christian writer should have selected such a model for his imitation, it is difficult to

understand how he could have succeeded in getting his forgery admitted into Marcion's Canon within a few years after its composition, notwithstanding the trifling nature of its contents from an ecclesiastical point of view—which, we know, militated at a later time against its reception in some parts of the Church.

The style of the Epistle is acknowledged by an overwhelming majority of scholars to be thoroughly Pauline, though its subject is unique. “Few pages have so clear an accent of truth—Paul alone, it would seem, could have written this little masterpiece” (Renan). “The fact that criticism has presumed to call in question the genuineness of these harmless lines shows that itself is not the genuine thing” (Reuss). It is now generally felt that Baur's maintenance of the spuriousness of this letter to Philemon was one of his worst blunders.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

As we have already indicated, the Epistle to Philemon would probably never have been called in question but for its connexion with Colossians. The connexion is such that, if

Philemon be genuine, Colossians must also be the work of Paul, or it must be a forgery suggested by the other and dependent on it. The latter supposition is extremely improbable, since the letter to Philemon makes no mention of Colossæ and says nothing that could have suggested the sending of a letter to that city; neither is there in it any mention of Tychicus who is so prominent in Colossians (4⁷⁻⁹). On the other hand, Colossians makes no reference to Philemon or to the peculiar circumstances of Onesimus, who is described as “the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you” (4⁹). Archippus is indeed mentioned in both Epistles, but in Philemon he is simply styled “our fellow-soldier,” whereas in Colossians we read: “And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it” (4¹⁷). Epaphras is also mentioned in both Epistles, but in the private letter he is simply referred to as “my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus,” and is one of those who salute Philemon, whereas in Colossians he is represented as “a faithful minister of Christ” who had laboured in Colossæ and its neighbourhood.

It is also worthy of note that the variations in the salutations of the two Epistles are such as we cannot imagine to have been resorted to in the interests of forgery, e.g. the insertion (4¹¹) of "Jesus, which is called Justus," one of those "who are of the circumcision," who is mentioned nowhere else in the New Testament, and the curious remark following the name of Mark, "If he come unto you, receive him" (4¹⁰). Altogether, as Dr. Sanday says, "Most Englishmen will have a short and easy method for deciding the genuineness of Colossians, for it is inseparably bound up with the most winning little letter to Philemon, which only pedantry could think of doubting."

The first to assail this Epistle was Mayerhoff (1838), who took exception to it partly because of its want of likeness to other epistles known to be the work of Paul, partly on account of its apparent dependence on Ephesians, which he accepted as genuine. This verdict was reversed by de Wette, who accepted Colossians and rejected Ephesians, and in this he has been followed by von Soden, who disproves the alleged dependence of Colossians, and is only doubtful of the genuineness of 1¹⁵⁻²⁰. It was

rejected by Hilgenfeld as a later production designed against the Gnostic tendencies represented by Cerinthus ; by Schmiedel, who dated it between A.D. 100 and 130, but failed to explain how it could have won the confidence of the Church half a century after the death of the Apostle ; and by Holsten and Weizsäcker. According to Holtzmann, working out an idea of Hitzig's, and followed, in part, by Pfeleiderer, our Epistle is an expansion of a genuine letter from Paul to the Colossians, prepared by a Paulinist (A.D. 75-100), who had previously used the same nucleus for the composition of our Ephesians, from which he drew for the enlargement of Colossians. A recent critic, R. Scott, adopts a view suggested by Ewald, that Timothy was the author of this Epistle.

The chief objection taken to the Pauline authorship is based on the references which the Epistle is alleged to contain to second century Gnosticism. But we have the authority of Jülicher for saying that the false teachers in question might as well have appeared in 60 as in 120 A.D. On the whole, it would seem that any symptoms of incipient Gnosticism which can be traced in the Epistle are sufficiently

accounted for by the peculiar religious tendencies which were prevalent among the Christians of Phrygia, who were in danger of falling into a kind of Jewish (perhaps Essene) theosophy, associated with asceticism, and tending to an exaggerated spiritualism, connected in some way with the worship of angels as representing the elements in Nature. It was in the endeavour to combat these tendencies that the Apostle was led to emphasize the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ over all those heavenly beings, real or imaginary, which threatened to draw away from Him the faith and allegiance of the Christians at Colossæ (Col. 1^{16 ff.}). We have here a signal illustration of the fact that the appearance of heresy in the Church is frequently the occasion for a fuller manifestation of the truth in the endeavour to correct it. In this instance the Apostle's teaching was only a fuller development of principles which he had already laid down in other Epistles, for we find essentially the same claim made on behalf of Christ in 1 Corinthians 3²³, 8⁶, 15²⁴⁻²⁸, and in Philippians 2⁵⁻¹¹, though in a somewhat different connexion. Notwithstanding the apparent novelty of its

teaching, therefore, and the disappearance of old watchwords, familiar to us in former Epistles but now giving way to new expressions suited to new forms of thought, the genuineness of this Epistle is acknowledged by the majority of critics, including Harnack, Blass, Zahn, Clemen, Renan, Sabatier, Jacquier, Jülicher, with such English and American scholars as Lightfoot, Salmon, Hort, Sanday, Knowling, Moffatt, McGiffert, and Bacon.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

This is one of the best-attested books in the New Testament, having apparently been used by some of the earliest Christian writers outside the Canon, such as Clement of Rome, Ignatius, and Polycarp. Hence, as Abbott (after Hort) says: "It is all but certain that the Epistle already existed about A.D. 95, quite certain that it existed about 110." Yet, on internal grounds, it has been called in question by a considerable number of critics, beginning with Schleiermacher, who was disposed to attribute it to Tychicus—the bearer apparently of this letter (6^{21 f.}) as well as of Colos-

sians and Philemon (Col. 4⁷⁻⁹)—a conjecture also favoured by Usteri and Renan. De Wette regarded it as a “verbose expansion” of Colossians by a disciple of Paul—a view combated by Lünemann, Meyer, and others. Schwegler and Baur relegated both Ephesians and Colossians to the middle of the second century on account of supposed traces of Gnosticism and Montanism; in which they were followed by Hilgenfeld, who differed, however, in attributing the two Epistles to different authors. According to Holtzmann (as we have already mentioned when treating Colossians), Ephesians was based on a genuine letter of Paul to the Colossians about A.D. 75-100, and the writer afterwards drew from the former to enlarge the Colossian letter, a theory which is not only too artificial to be true but also fails to account for the disappearance of the original letter, or to explain why the writer of Ephesians should have borrowed from that letter alone, while leaving out its most distinctive message. Harnack and Jülicher have difficulty in accepting the Epistle on account of expressions and ideas which seem to them to be incompatible with a Pauline origin (e.g.

2²⁰, 3⁵, 4⁷⁻¹¹), but they admit that, as the genuineness of Philemon helps to establish that of Colossians, so the acceptance of the latter should obviate the objections taken to Ephesians on account of features which it shares in common with Colossians. The similarity between the two Epistles is greater than exists between any other writings attributed to Paul, half of Ephesians being full of expressions found in Colossians. At the same time, the parallelism is often marked by such a freedom of style as to forbid the supposition of mechanical imitation where the likeness is of a closer and more literal kind. This freedom, and the frequent introduction of words and phrases that are not found elsewhere in Paul's writings or even in the New Testament, tell against the theory of forgery. Both Epistles claim to be the work of Paul, and the simplest and most natural supposition seems to be that they were written within a very short time of each other, the interval being even shorter, and the consequent similarity even greater, than between I and II Thessalonians.

In rejecting this Epistle Baur laid stress on

the incongruity of its title "to the saints which are at Ephesus" and its contents; but the objection loses its force when we regard the Epistle as a circular letter to be sent to various Churches in proconsular Asia, which was fast becoming the leading province of Christendom (cf. Rev. 1⁴).¹

¹ This is the view now generally taken. Many critics identify the Epistle with that referred to in Colossians 4¹⁶, where the Colossians are told to read also "the epistle from Laodicea," and to send their own letter for perusal by the Christians there; Tychicus, the bearer of the letters, having probably visited Laodicea on the way to Colossæ, bringing the circular letter "from Laodicea" with him, after it had been read and perhaps copied there. In this connexion it is noteworthy that Marcion refers to the Epistle as addressed "to the Laodiceans." It is still more significant that the words "in Ephesus" (1¹) are wanting in the two oldest manuscripts (N and B), and have also been struck out by correction in manuscript 67, and that they were also absent from the ancient manuscripts known to Basil in A.D. 360. Add to this that the Epistle contains no personal salutations or allusions, and that the benediction is in a more general form than usual ("Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith," 6²³); while the Apostle's usual autograph is absent, perhaps because copies of the letter had to be made out by the messenger on the way or at the different places which were to receive them. That the Epistle was not meant exclusively for Ephesus is evident from a number of

In such a letter the warnings addressed to the Colossian Church against the evils with which it was specially threatened would have been out of place, and are therefore omitted, but the rest of Colossians is reproduced and amplified to illustrate and enforce the unity of the Christian Church—a unity which Paul realized to be far deeper and more enduring than that of the great empire in whose capital he lay a prisoner. It is the most catholic of all his Epistles, representing the Church universal to be the mystical body of Christ, who is the centre of all life and the source of all authority, in time and in eternity, in this world and in that which is to come. This is a great advance on the Apostle's teaching in any previous letter; but "the Church," "the Church of God," was a conception which had long been familiar to him (1 Cor. 10³²,

passages which imply that the readers had no personal acquaintance or connexion with Paul, though they may have received the Gospel from some of his disciples (1¹⁵⁻¹⁹, 3¹⁻⁴, 4¹⁷⁻²², Col. 1³⁻⁹). In these circumstances it is easy to understand how the Epistle should have become associated with the Church at Ephesus, as the leading city of the province, at whose port Tychicus would have to land in the prosecution of his journey.

12²⁸, 15⁹; Gal. 1¹³; Phil. 3⁶; cf. Acts 20²⁸). Although the Epistle is addressed to Gentile Christians, Paul could not forget that there were many converts from Judaism in the province of Asia, and although the day of conflict with Pharisaic intolerance within the Church was over, he felt that it still remained for him to do what he could to foster among Christians everywhere, whether Jews or Gentiles, a fuller sense of their union in Christ through the Divine life which they all alike derived from Him.¹

In this connexion the combination of Jewish patriotism with thankful and joyful acknowledgment of the Divine wisdom and goodness in the admission of the Gentiles to the covenant of salvation, which is so characteristic of this Epistle, could befit no one so well as the Apostle of the Gentiles who was also a Hebrew of the Hebrews. On the other hand, there are occasional ideas and expressions in the Epistle which we should not have expected from Paul (2²⁰, 3⁵, 4⁷⁻¹¹); and emphasis is also

¹ Hence the appropriateness of the opening words of the Epistle, as rendered by B. Weiss, "to the saints who also believe in Jesus Christ."

laid on aspects of the Gospel revelation on which he had not previously dwelt. But the key to many of these ideas, which seem so strange to us, is probably to be found in the Jewish apocalyptic literature which dealt with cosmological and eschatological problems, and with which the Apostle was evidently familiar.¹ It must also be remembered that though the Epistle is unique, from a literary point of view, among the writings attributed to Paul, its poetic and lofty style of composition is only in keeping with the sublime nature of its contents, winning the admiration of thoughtful minds in all ages, and leading Coleridge to describe it as "one of the divinest compositions of man."

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

This Epistle is very generally admitted to be the work of Paul. The external evidence in its favour is remarkably good, including a reference which Polycarp makes, in his Epistle to the Philippians, to a letter they had received from "the blessed and glorious Paul." It breathes such a warm spirit of gratitude and affection,

¹ According to Origen the quotation in 1 Cor. 2⁹ is from the Apocalypse of Elias.

and is at the same time so circumstantial in many of its allusions, and so free from any sign of doctrinal or ecclesiastical purpose on the part of the writer, that any suspicion of forgery is now generally abandoned.

Baur stated various objections to it, but none of them is considered to have much weight. Attributing its composition, as he did, to a supposed policy of conciliation in the second century, he found its pivot, as Lightfoot says,¹ in the mention of Clement, a mythical or almost mythical person, whom he supposed to represent the union of the Petrine and Pauline parties in the Church. Schwegler then carried the theory a step farther and declared that the two names, Euodia and Syntyche, actually represent these two parties, while the "true yokefellow" is Peter himself; then Volkmar, going still farther, held this fact to be indicated by the very names Euodia, or *Rightway*, and Syntyche, or *Consort*, denoting respectively the orthodoxy of the one party and the incorporation of the other. Lastly Hitzig, lamenting that interpreters of the New Testament were not more thoroughly imbued

¹ "Essays on Supernatural Religion," p. 24.

with the language and spirit of the Old Testament, maintained that these two names were reproductions of the patriarchs, Asher and Gad—their sex having been changed in the transition from one language to another, and that they represented the Greek and Roman elements in the Church, while the Epistle itself was a plagiarism from the *Agricola* of Tacitus! Among recent critics there are very few of any eminence who deny the genuineness of the Epistle, and it is significant that Holsten, who is the chief of them, rejects it for other reasons than those adduced by Baur, and assigns it, not to the second century but to A.D. 70-80, soon after the Apostle's death. Holsten's chief objection to the Epistle is that in some passages its doctrine and expression are not quite Pauline. But in most cases this objection can be satisfactorily met, and Holsten's reasoning has been aptly characterized by Paul Schmidt as "New Testament hypercriticism," while Schürer says: "His arguments are so foolish that one is sometimes tempted to put them down as slips of the pen."

Among those who admit the Pauline authorship there is a growing tendency to place the

Epistle last in the series to which it belongs.¹ It was put first by Lightfoot and Hort on account of its likeness to Romans from a literary point of view, and its freedom from any reference to the "incipient Gnosticism" dealt with in Colossians and Ephesians, such as we might have expected to find if it had been written soon after these Epistles. But this argument loses its force when we remember that "it was not in Paul's way to send to Philippi an elaborate treatise against a subtle, speculative heresy which had never affected that Church" (Ramsay); and there are various circumstances alluded to in the Epistle which seem to show that the two years mentioned in Acts 28^{30 f.} were now almost over (1¹²⁻¹⁸, 2³⁰, 4¹²⁻¹⁴), and that the long-delayed trial had begun, preventing the Apostle from carrying on missionary work in private as he had been doing, and leading him to feel that his case had reached a crisis (cf. Phil. 1⁷, 2^{23 f.}). With this agrees the fact that the valued fellow-workers mentioned in Colossians 4¹⁰⁻¹⁴ were no longer available for service (Phil. 2¹⁹⁻²¹).

¹ Hilgenfeld, Harnack, Holtzmann, Weizsäcker, Pfeiderer, Jülicher, Zahn, Vincent, Moffatt, Kennedy, Gibb, etc.

From 3^{1 f.} it has been inferred by a number of critics (Lünemann, Ewald, Schenkel, Mangold), that this was not the first time Paul had written to the Philippians, and it has also been argued by Lemoyne (1685), Heinrichs, Hausrath, Spitta, Völter, Clemen, and others, that our Philippians is made up of several letters, written in whole or in part by Paul. The most plausible form of this theory finds a genuine letter in chapters 1, 2, and another in chapters 3, 4 ; each letter concluding, as usual, with a number of personal references (2¹⁹⁻³⁰, and 4). If this view be adopted, Hausrath and Bacon are probably right in thinking that the order of the two letters should be reversed (cf. 2^{20 f.}, and 4^{21 f.}). But the unity of the Epistle is still maintained by most writers, and even van Manen, who assigns it to about 125 A.D., admits that there is no appearance of patchwork about it. If the abrupt change in 3^{1 f.} requires explanation, it may perhaps be found, as Ewald and Reuss have suggested, in some fresh news the Apostle had received of Jewish hypocrisy and wickedness, which led him to write as he has done in chapter 3, although he had no intention of doing so when he began the Epistle.

CHAPTER VI

I AND II TIMOTHY AND TITUS ; HEBREWS ;
JAMES ; I AND II PETER AND JUDE

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO
TIMOTHY

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO TIMOTHY

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS

IT is generally agreed that the Pastoral Epistles (I and II Timothy, and Titus) cannot be assigned to any period in the life of Paul as recorded in the Book of Acts. The attempts, recently made by J. V. Bartlet, W. E. Bowen and others, to harmonize the statements and allusions in them with the course of events narrated by Luke are not regarded as satisfactory,¹ and if we were shut up to the

¹ The latest statement of this position will be found in an able and ingenious article by Prof. Bartlet in the "Expositor" for April, 1913, in which he seeks to prove that I Timothy and Titus were written soon after Paul's arrival

belief that Paul was never set free from the imprisonment in which the Book of Acts leaves him, we should be constrained to abandon the idea that he ever wrote these Epistles.

But in point of fact there is much to be said in favour of the supposition that Paul's appeal to Cæsar resulted in his acquittal, and that he was thus enabled to resume his missionary labours. Sir William Ramsay holds that such a result was to be expected, having regard to the Roman law and policy of the time; and of this we have some confirmation in the favourable opinion of the Apostle's case which was expressed by Festus and Agrippa, when he was brought up for trial at Cæsarea (Acts 25^{18, 25}; 26^{31 f.}; 28¹⁷⁻¹⁹). Paul himself seems to have expected to be set free, if we may judge from the hopeful way in which he expresses himself in Philemon v. 22 and Phil. 2^{23 f.}, as compared with II Timothy 4⁶⁻⁸, where he speaks as if his career were practically over. There is another passage in II Timothy, namely 4¹⁶⁻¹⁸, which seems to contain a reference

in Rome, say in the early summer of 60, and II Timothy two years later, Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians having been composed in the interval.

to his acquittal and to the opportunity which had thus been afforded him for an extension of his apostolic work.

Tradition bears testimony to the same effect. The First Epistle of Clement (c. A.D. 95) speaks of Paul having gone to "the bound of the West,"² and the Muratorian Fragment mentions that he went to Spain, while Eusebius and Jerome seem to have no doubt that he was set at liberty.³ On all these grounds a considerable number of eminent

¹ Against these statements no weight can be attached to the presentiment expressed by Paul, some years before, to the Ephesian elders at Miletus: "And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more" (Acts 20²⁵).

² The words that follow: "And having borne witness before the rulers he was thus released from the world and went to the holy place"—might suggest Rome as the Western limit referred to, if Clement had not been writing from that city, where the expression would naturally refer to Spain, especially as the Apostle had declared it to be his intention to pay a visit to that country.

³ Several apocryphal works of the second century, viz., "Acts of Peter and John," "Acts of Peter," and "Acts of Paul," imply that the Apostle was liberated and afterwards suffered martyrdom in the Neronian persecution. But the "Acts of Paul and Peter" assumes that his first trial at Rome had a fatal termination.

critics, including Harnack, Jacquier, Lightfoot, Salmon, Hort, Zahn, Spitta, Findlay, and Bernard, regard the Apostle's liberation, if not as an assured fact (Harnack), as highly probable. On this hypothesis there is no difficulty in finding room in the Apostle's subsequent life (59-64) for the composition of these Epistles and for the events which they imply—I Timothy and Titus being assigned to the period of his renewed activity, and II Timothy to the later imprisonment at Rome, before his martyrdom under Nero (64 A.D.).

As regards the external evidence for the genuineness of the Epistles, it is generally admitted that expressions derived from I and II Timothy are to be found in the writings of Polycarp, and, from all the three Epistles, in the letters of Ignatius. Clement of Rome also uses language apparently borrowed from the Epistles, but in order to escape the force of his testimony it has been suggested that the writer of the Epistles may have been the borrower, though he must have known that, in putting into the mouth of the Apostle language derived from so well known a writer as Clement, he was running a great risk of

having his pseudonymity detected and his letters condemned. The most serious defect in the external evidence is that the Epistles are not included in the Canon of Marcion, but this is sufficiently accounted for by their insistence on sound doctrine, which Marcion, with his heretical views, could not be expected to appreciate.¹

As regards internal evidence, there are several things which have excited the grave suspicion of a great many critics. Origen tells us of some people in his day who dared to reject II Timothy on account of its quoting from an apocryphal book about Jannes and Jambres (II Tim. 3⁸). But this objection does not seem to have been widely felt, and the only serious opposition to the Epistles which we hear of in the early Church, was among a few heretical teachers, such as Marcion, Basilides, and Tatian (the last of whom accepted Titus only); and the three Epistles are

¹ The fact of the Epistles being addressed not to Churches but to individuals may have furnished Marcion with an excuse for their omission. It is true that he included Philemon in his Canon, but it is almost inseparable from Colossians (which he admitted), and it comes last of all in his list.

included by Eusebius in his list of books universally received.

It was not till the beginning of the nineteenth century that an attack was made upon them by the Higher Criticism. In 1804 I Timothy was called in question by J. E. C. Schmidt, and in 1807 Schleiermacher suggested that it was based on II Timothy and Titus. Suspicion gradually extended to the two latter also, and in 1812 all three were declared spurious by Eichhorn, followed by de Wette and Schrader. In 1835 Baur pronounced them to be productions of the second century (*c.* 150), designed to counteract the Gnostic teaching of Marcion and others, to which he found allusions in such passages as I Timothy 1⁴; 4^{3, 8}; 6²⁰; Titus 1^{14 f.}; 3⁹. A similar date was adopted by Schwegler and Hilgenfeld; but recently the adherents of the anti-traditional school have taken a different line, in view of the Jewish character of the errors referred to in I Timothy 1⁴ and Titus 1^{10, 14}, and on account of the light thrown upon the "fables and endless genealogies" by Philo's work on the subject of Biblical Antiquities, and the Book of Jubilees, which show that it is not emanations

of æons and angels that are referred to (as Baur imagined) but allegorical interpretations of Old Testament pedigrees. As for the "oppositions of science falsely so called" (I Tim. 6²⁰), which Baur supposed to refer to the *antitheses* (or contrasts) that Marcion had made out between the Old and the New Testament and had taken as a name for one of his books, it is now generally agreed that this view is untenable, the most probable explanation being that the oppositions referred to were the rival decisions of Jewish Rabbis on minute points of law, which gave rise to endless controversy.

In these circumstances most of the critics referred to find the *milieu* of the Epistles in the end of the first, or the first quarter of the second, century (Holtzmann, Jülicher, Pfeiderer, Beyschlag, Weizsäcker, von Soden). Among English scholars opinion is divided, the genuineness of the Epistles being maintained by Hort, Lightfoot, Salmon, Sanday, Findlay, Bernard, Lock, Ramsay, Knowling, Newport White, Shaw, Grierson (in common with such continental critics as Zahn, B. Weiss, Belser, Blass, and Ruggenbach),

but denied, in a general sense, by S. Davidson, McGiffert, Moffatt,¹ Peake, Strachan, R. Scott, and others, who (with the majority of foreign critics) admit the genuineness of a few fragments only, which are to be found in II Timothy, especially 1^{1 f., 15-18}, 4⁹⁻²¹, and in Titus.²

A great amount of industry and ingenuity has been expended³ in the attempt to determine precisely the original documents, and

¹ In the E. Bi. Dr. Moffatt declares this view to be "one of the best established in New Testament research." On the other hand, Canon Grierson in Hastings' most recent D. B. says: "The general tendency of criticism may be said to be towards establishing their genuineness." In his recent volume in the I. T. L., Moffatt describes the three Epistles as "pseudonymous compositions of a Paulinist who wrote during the period of transition into the neo-Catholic church of the second century, with the aim of safeguarding the common Christianity of the age in terms of the great Pauline tradition."

² II Timothy is accepted in its entirety (without the two others) by Neander, Bleek, Reuss, and Heinrici. Almost every reader is struck with its earnestness and sincerity, and the verisimilitude of many of its personal allusions, especially in the last chapter, where many proper names are introduced, both new and old.

³ By Holtzmann, Hitzig, Hausrath, Hilgenfeld, Lemme, Harnack, Hesse, von Soden, Clemen, Krenkel, McGiffert, Moffatt, Bacon, and others,—led by Credner (1836).

trace the process of expansion and adaptation by which the Epistles reached their present form¹—but without much success, if we may judge from the conflicting nature of the results. The critics have taken great liberties with the text, even II Timothy 4⁹⁻²¹, which bears unmistakable tokens of genuineness, being cut up into an earlier and a later fragment, in order to get rid of its testimony to a second imprisonment at Rome. The use of the knife has become almost as fashionable in Biblical Criticism as in medical surgery. But whereas in surgery operations are not resorted to till the presence of disease has been ascertained and located on indubitable evidence, our Biblical pathologists have often no evidence to offer but their own impressions of what the writer could, would, or should have written, and they hardly ever agree as to the specific operations that are needed for the removal of extraneous matter and the restoration of a sound text.

At the same time, it cannot be denied that the marked difference in the diction, style, reasoning, and subject-matter of these Epistles,

¹ According to Harnack, the process went on till 150 A.D., chiefly 90-110, the date of the nuclei being 59-64.

as compared with the other writings of Paul, creates for the critic a difficult problem, which resolves itself into the question whether a sufficient explanation of the difference can be found in the special circumstances under which the Apostle wrote, and the special purposes which the Epistles were intended to serve.

The excessive number of new words and phrases is itself a serious difficulty. The number of such expressions is no less than 171, averaging one for every verse and a half, which is a much larger proportion than is found in any of Paul's other Epistles. Some of them are Latinisms, which may be attributed to his recent Western association, and for the rest it has to be remembered that the previous Epistles reveal a gradual extension of the Apostle's vocabulary, as he advanced in life and was confronted with new problems in different parts of the world. If the verbal peculiarities are more numerous here than elsewhere, it is only what might have been expected considering that the Apostle was now engaged in a task which he had not previously been called to perform. It was not a task that was likely to give rise to lofty flights of eloquence, such as

we find in some of Paul's earlier Epistles, neither did it call for the exercise of the dialectical powers which he possessed in a high degree. The absence of his favourite Greek particles, and the comparative smoothness of the style, may reasonably be attributed to the fact that he was not arguing, but giving practical directions with reference to the worship, discipline, and government of the Church ; and if the composition shows less spirit and freedom than usual, we have to remember that the writer was no longer possessed of the fire of youth, but was now "Paul the aged," in a fuller sense than when he used these words in his letter to Philemon.¹

One of the arguments for regarding the Epistles as compilations made some time after the Apostle's death is the want of logical connexion sometimes observable in them, but the force of the argument is broken by the fact that Pauline words and phrases and ideas are

¹ It is of course possible that the amanuensis may have had a hand in the composition, and it has been suggested that Luke (II Tim. 4 ¹¹) may have been the amanuensis, or even the author. Grau thinks the Epistles may even have been written by Timothy and Titus themselves.

to be found not only in the few passages which are confessedly genuine, but in many other places. This fact shows that, if the Epistles were not written by Paul himself, they must have been produced by some one who desired to pass for the Apostle. In that case how are we to account for the fact that in many respects he makes no attempt to preserve Paul's obvious characteristics as a letter-writer? The same argument applies to the historical notes he has introduced into the Epistles, which are so difficult to reconcile with the Apostle's life as recorded in Acts. Why has he not tried to harmonize his inventions with the historical *data* already familiar to readers of the New Testament?

It is alleged by many critics that the condition of the Church as reflected in these Epistles shows a great advance on what we read of in the earlier letters, both as regards organized effort and fixity of doctrine, and that such an advance could not have taken place in the Apostle's lifetime. But it has to be remembered that the Church was still in the full flush of its youthful enthusiasm and energy, which would naturally seek expression in new

forms of thought and action. Hitherto its life and doctrine, in those parts of the world in which Timothy and Titus were called to labour, had been largely regulated and controlled by the personal influence of Paul, and now that his life was drawing to a close, he felt that the time had come when it behoved him to see to the preservation of the great truths of the Gospel which he had laboured to establish that they might be handed down as a precious deposit to future generations, and also to secure that suitable means were provided for the carrying on of the work and worship of the Church, after his guiding hand had been withdrawn.

If it be true that the Epistles are a compilation got up in the interests of an ecclesiastical policy, it is strange that the author did not put more of the genuine Pauline remains into the First Epistle, which is much more important, from an ecclesiastical point of view, than II Timothy. It is also strange that a compiler actuated by such a motive should have so little to say about questions of organization strictly so-called, taking for granted the various officials and classes to

whom he refers, and directing all his efforts to the maintenance of a high moral and religious standard among those who are in any way called to represent the Church.

As regards the inferences to be drawn from the ecclesiastical situation disclosed in the Epistles, we have a decisive proof that the writer could not have belonged to the sub-apostolic age, in the fact that there is here no trace either of the monarchical episcopate to which Ignatius, writing about A.D. 115, attaches so much importance, or of the diocesan episcopate which made its appearance somewhat later. As in Philippians (1¹), bishops and deacons are still the two orders responsible for the teaching and superintendence of the Church; and, as in the Book of Acts (20^{17, 28}), "bishop" and "presbyter" (or "elder") are convertible terms (I Tim. 1^{5, 7}; 3¹⁻⁷; 5¹⁷⁻²²; Titus 1⁵⁻⁹). The position held by Timothy at Ephesus and by Titus at Crete was evidently temporary; they were acting as the Apostle's delegates, commissioned to do a special work, as they had done elsewhere on former occasions.

There are a number of other objections of a

minor nature which have been taken to the Pauline authorship of the Epistles. It is said, for example, that the writer's attitude towards Timothy, which would have been appropriate enough in addressing a young and inexperienced worker, is altogether out of place in the case of a man like Timothy, who had been already about fifteen years in the mission field (1 Tim. 1^{12, 18}; 2⁷; 4¹⁴; 5²²; 2 Tim. 1^{3, 4, 6, 11}, 3¹¹⁻¹⁵). But age is relative, and the lapse of time was not likely to make any difference on Paul's view of Timothy as still "my true child in faith." Timothy appears to have been neither strong in body (I Tim. 5²³), nor self-reliant in spirit; and when we consider the great responsibilities which the Apostle was laying upon him, we cannot wonder at the solemn exhortations he addresses to him, almost in the form of a last will and testament. Both in his personal reminiscences and in his anxiety for Timothy's future (II Tim. 4¹⁻¹⁸), Paul's language is very natural in the circumstances; and the same may be said of his tone in addressing Titus, which is much less tender, because he knows him to be quite competent for the work entrusted to him. It has been well

said that such delicate variations form an excellent proof of genuineness.

As regards the writer's assertion of his apostolic authority, to which objection has also been taken, some of the Jewish Christians may have still been disposed to call in question Paul's apostleship, and in any case there could be no impropriety in his alluding to it, when he was appointing two comparatively young men to act as his deputies over such a wide area.

Again, it has been pointed out, as at variance with Pauline usage, that the word "faith" is occasionally employed in these Epistles in an objective sense, to denote a system of doctrine rather than a personal union with Christ, while the word "righteousness," on the other hand, is used to denote a personal virtue, instead of expressing a theological abstraction. But in both these cases the Apostle's language was probably in keeping with the changing usage of the Church, which was now realizing the necessity of safeguarding the interests both of Christian ethics as represented by righteousness, and of Christian doctrine as embodied in the creed.

There are other things in the Epistles

which are alleged to betray their non-Pauline origin, such as the want of any adequate occasion for a written communication, as the Apostle could have found an opportunity to give oral instructions; the want of any due recognition of spiritual gifts to be exercised by private members of the Church; the occurrence in the Epistles of proverbial sayings already current in the Church, and of apparent quotations from Christian hymns and confessions (I Tim. 1¹⁵; 3¹⁶; 4⁹; 6¹²⁻¹⁶; II Tim. 2^{2, 8, 11}; 4¹; Titus 3⁸); the repetition, in II Timothy 4⁶, of an illustration referring to Paul's approaching death, which he had already used in a similar sense in Philippians 2¹⁷. But it may be fairly said that hardly any of these features presents any real difficulty, when considered in the light of all the circumstances.

Probably the authorship of the Epistles will always remain a subject of controversy, but, by whatever process they may have reached their present form, we may well believe that they represent the ripest fruits of Paul's experience as a preacher and as an administrator. Though they make no fresh contribution to Christian theology, they reconcile in a practical

form, under the name of "godliness" (an expression characteristic of the Epistles), the rival interests of faith and works, of doctrine and morality, and set before the office-bearers of the Church an ideal of pastoral character and duty, which has done much during the last nineteen centuries to deepen their sense of responsibility and keep them faithful to their high calling.

Assuming that the Epistles were written by Paul shortly before his death, we may date them about A.D. 64.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS

In our English Version this Epistle bears the title "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews," but in the oldest manuscript of which we have any knowledge, the only words prefixed are, "To the Hebrews"; and, unlike all the other Epistles attributed to Paul, it contains no intimation that it was either authorized or penned by him. The first authority whom we find attributing the writing to Paul is Pantænus of Alexandria, who accounted for its being anonymous by the

desire of the writer to avoid the appearance of usurping the position of Apostle to the Hebrews, which belonged to Christ himself. Pantænus's successor, Clement of Alexandria, regarded it as probable that Paul had written the original in Hebrew, which had been translated by Luke, and that the suppression of Paul's name had been due to a fear of offending Hebrew prejudice. Origen, who evidently shared the hesitation felt by his predecessors at Alexandria in acknowledging the Pauline authorship, suggested that the Epistle had probably been composed by some one from personal recollections of the Apostle's teaching, and mentions that it was held by some to be the work of Clement of Rome, and by others of Luke. Notwithstanding the doubts thus felt by some of those most competent to judge, the Epistle was admitted into the Peshitta as part of the Syriac Canon, and before the end of the third century it was commonly regarded by the Eastern Church as a genuine writing of Paul.

In the West, on the other hand, notwithstanding the use of the Epistle by Clement of Rome in the first century (95-6), there is no

trace of its being acknowledged by any one as canonical for a century and a half afterwards. It had no place in Marcion's Canon, and is not mentioned in the Muratorian Fragment, unless under the name of "ad Alexandrinos." We do not find it in the Old Latin Version, and its apostolic character was not acknowledged by Irenæus, Hippolytus, or Caius—three very important witnesses in the second and third century. It is true that Tertullian of Carthage (*c.* A.D. 220) quotes it, but he attributes it, not to Paul, but Barnabas; and Cyprian (*c.* 250) makes no use of it, notwithstanding the emphasis it lays on Christ's priestly character. Eusebius mentions that the Epistle was questioned at Rome, on the ground that it was not written by Paul. This continued to be the case for some time afterwards, and it was not till the beginning of the fifth century that the Epistle came to be accepted by the whole Church as the work of Paul, partly owing to the high value set upon its teaching, and partly through the deference which Jerome and Augustine were disposed to pay to the sentiment and usage of the Eastern Church.

If the external testimony to the Pauline

authorship is quite inadequate, the internal evidence is still less favourable. Indeed, the Epistle is so unlike the other writings attributed to Paul, both as regards style and diction (notwithstanding a few verbal coincidences); it differs from them so much in its mode of quotation from the Old Testament, in which it invariably follows the Septuagint; and it looks at Judaism from such a different point of view¹ (the priesthood of Christ, to which it gives prominence, being almost entirely absent from Paul's acknowledged writings), that the idea of its being in any sense a production of the Apostle's is abandoned by all who take an interest in New Testament Criticism.

For a long time discussion has turned on the comparative probability of other names suggested, and the destination of the Epistle has also engaged a considerable amount of attention. A good many critics, beginning with Röth, in 1836, and including more recently Weizsäcker, Schürer, Pfeiderer, von Soden,

¹ "The one abolishes the Law, the other transfigures it. . . ." The one was revolutionist, the other evolutionist."—Ménégoz.

Jülicher, Wrede, Harnack, Feine, McGiffert, Bacon, and Moffatt, are disposed to reject the early and unanimous tradition that the Epistle was addressed to Jewish Christians. But, while it undoubtedly contains many things equally suitable for Gentile and for Jewish readers, in its main features it appears to have been specially fitted to meet the intellectual and spiritual needs of those who had been converted from the Jewish to the Christian faith. Its argument from first to last is built upon the teaching of the Old Testament, it takes for granted a deep and intelligent interest, on the part of its readers, in the whole Jewish ritual, and its allusions to "the fathers" (1¹), "the seed of Abraham" (2¹⁶), "the people" (5³; 7^{11, 27}; 13¹²), and "the camp" (13¹³), are such as we might expect if both writer and readers were of the stock of Israel. Although the title "To the Hebrews" is probably nothing more than the supposition of an ancient copyist, it expresses the view which a perusal of the Epistle naturally produces on the reader, and the arguments to the contrary which are drawn from a few isolated passages (6^{1 f.}; 3^{12 ff.}) are quite insufficient

to remove this general impression. The object of the communication was to strengthen its readers under the trials to which they were exposed at the hands of their infatuated fellow-countrymen as well as from other sources. For this purpose they are reminded of the heavenly inheritance to which they have succeeded as followers of the risen and exalted Christ, in whom the promises made to their fathers will yet have a glorious fulfilment, with which all the blessings of the Old Testament dispensation are unworthy to be compared. It appears that their early enthusiasm had grown cold, and that there had been a serious declension in their spiritual life; but whether the danger which now threatened them was that of relapsing into Judaism (which is the view generally taken), or of falling into unbelief and idolatry (Zahn, von Soden, Jülicher, G. Milligan, and others) is not very clear (6⁴⁻⁶; 10^{28 f.}).

According to Reuss, Lipsius, Wrede, and others, the Epistle was originally intended for Hebrew Christians in general, and the last chapter with its personal details was an addition intended to give the composition an

epistolary complexion and adapt it to the case of a particular Church or congregation. But this view is refuted by the fact that the special circumstances of the readers are referred to not only in the concluding chapter but in several places in the body of the Epistle (5¹²; 6^{9 f.}; 10^{32 ff.}; 12⁴); and one of the problems of Criticism is to determine to what Church in particular the Epistle was addressed. Jerusalem, Cæsarea, Ephesus, Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome have all been suggested, and something can be said for each of them. In some respects Jerusalem is the place where we can imagine that Jewish Christians would be exposed to the greatest trial of their faith, owing to the fanatical rejection of the Gospel by the majority of their countrymen, and the disappointment of their own hopes of a speedy return of the Saviour in His divine power and glory.¹ But there are references in the Epistle (2³; 5¹²; 6¹⁰; 10³⁴) which seem to be at variance with this hypothesis; and the employment of the Greek language, and constant reference to the Septuagint, are regarded by

¹ This is the view taken by Hort, Salmon, Westcott, and Bruce.

many as proving that the Epistle could not have been written by anyone likely to have influence with the most conservative section of the Jewish Christians in the metropolis.

Recently there has been a strong tendency to identify the readers with the members of a congregation at Rome (Rom. 16^{5, 14, 15}; cf. Heb. 13¹⁷ and ²⁴), composed mainly of Jewish Christians.¹ This gives the most natural interpretation to the words in 13²⁴, "They of Italy salute you," as conveying the greetings of Italian exiles to fellow-Christians at Rome, and it also explains the intended visit of Timothy, who was much connected with Rome in his later years, and the acquaintance with the Epistle shown by Clement of Rome. In this connexion it is interesting to learn from ancient inscriptions that one of the synagogues in Rome bore the name of the "Synagogue of the Hebrews."²

¹ So Renan, Pfleiderer, Harnack, Zahn.

² Prof. J. Dickie in an article in the "Expositor" for April, 1913, has suggested that the homily may have been addressed to a latitudinarian House-Church tinged with Alexandrianism, whose interest, both in Judaism and Christianity, was largely of a speculative nature, and that the congregation may have died out, leaving no cherished

As regards authorship, there is little to be said in favour of Clement (suggested by Erasmus), even if we suppose the salutation to have been sent from Italy and the Epistle to have emanated from Rome. While there is some resemblance between the two writers, Hebrews is on a far higher level than we can conceive the author of the Epistle of Clement to have been capable of; and, if he had been the writer, his name would have been almost sure to be preserved.

As regards Luke, the fact that he was a Gentile (Col. 4¹⁴ and ¹¹) precludes the possibility of his having been the author, notwithstanding the linguistic similarities which have been observed between this Epistle and his acknowledged works in the New Testament.

A name which has the support, as we have seen, of Tertullian of Carthage, who had some connexion with Rome, is that of Barnabas. From his associations as a Levite, his knowledge of Greek as a native of Cyprus, his devout character, and his influence in the early Church, we can readily imagine him to have memories behind it, which would account for the want of any reliable tradition regarding the history of the Epistle.

written such an epistle as this, especially if it be true, as tradition affirms, that he had some connexion with Alexandria, whose allegorical mode of thought is reflected in the Epistle. Against all this, however, we have to set the facts that, so far as we know, Barnabas had never any connexion with Rome, and that, if the Epistle was addressed to a Church in the East, his name as the author could scarcely have fallen into oblivion.

One of the most plausible conjectures is that which was favoured, if not originated, by Luther, namely, that Apollos was the author. The description given, in Acts 18²⁴⁻²⁸, of this remarkable man and his preaching—as a Jew, an Alexandrian by race, a learned man, mighty in the Scriptures, who powerfully confuted the Jews, shewing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ—would afford strong confirmation of his authorship, if there was any ancient tradition in its favour; but failing such tradition we can only claim for the suggestion a high degree of probability.¹

¹ Prof. J. V. Bartlet, in an article in the "Expositor" for June, 1913, argues that the Epistle was written by Apollos from Rome to Jewish Christians in Ephesus *c.* 62 A.D.

Another interesting conjecture, originally broached by Bleek, has recently been advocated with great ability by Harnack (who was at one time in favour of Barnabas), and has been worked out by Rendel Harris. They are of opinion that the Epistle was composed by Priscilla and Aquila, two eminent benefactors of the Church, who gave their house in Rome as a place of meeting for public worship (Rom. 16^{3 ff.}), before they were banished from that city by the edict of Claudius (Acts 18²), and of whose distinguished zeal and ability we have a proof in the fact that when they heard Apollos speaking in the synagogue at Ephesus, and perceived that he knew only the baptism of John, "they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more carefully" (Acts 18^{24 ff.}). If Priscilla had the chief hand in the composition—and it is noticeable that on several occasions her name precedes that of her husband—this would account for the prominence given to women (Deborah excepted) in the roll-call of faith in the eleventh chapter, and it might also explain how the authors' names had been suppressed in deference to Paul's disapproval

of female teaching in the Church. If we may suppose that Apollos collaborated with Priscilla and Aquila it would render the theory still more probable.¹

According to Sir William Ramsay, the communication was sent by Philip to the Judaizing section of the Church in Jerusalem, as the result of discussions held with Paul during his imprisonment at Cæsarea, the concluding passage only having come from the Apostle's pen. Even this slight reservation is not approved by E. L. Hicks, who attributes the whole composition to Philip, basing his argument chiefly on a comparison of the language of the Epistle with that of Colossians and Ephesians, which he also assigns to the period of the imprisonment at Cæsarea. But, besides sharing in the defect common to almost all the suggestions which have been mentioned, namely, a want of external testimony of any real value in their favour, this theory is rendered unlikely by the fact that there is in the Epistle little trace of the Pauline type of

¹ The change from the plural to the singular in 13¹⁸ f. and in 13²³ may be due to the writer being associated with others in the composition or sending of the Epistle.

doctrine, and it is also open to the objections, already stated, to the idea that the Epistle was addressed to Christians living in Jerusalem.

The name of Silvanus (Silas) has also been suggested. He was at one time a leader of the primitive Church in Jerusalem (Acts 15²²), and accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey. Later he became a coadjutor of Peter, acting as his amanuensis or secretary in the writing of I Peter (5¹²). We also find him associated with Timothy in preaching (II Cor. 1¹⁹) and correspondence (I Thess. 1¹, II Thess. 1¹). But beyond these general facts no evidence can be adduced in support of the theory, except the resemblance between I Peter and Hebrews, which shows that there was some degree of indebtedness on the one side or the other. Peter himself has been suggested on the strength of this resemblance, but 2^{3 b} gives the impression that the writer had not been himself a hearer of Christ, and, so far as we know, Peter had never come under the influence of Alexandrian culture.

The date we are to assign to the Epistle depends largely on the question whether the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus had already

taken place. While the first impression we receive from the reading of the Epistle is that the Temple was still standing, it cannot be denied that on closer examination certain passages, which were supposed to warrant this conclusion, are found to be capable of a different interpretation, and that the ritual which the writer had in view was that of the Tabernacle, not of the Temple. But it is scarcely conceivable that, if the Temple and its ritual had been already swept away, no reference should have been made by the writer to this crowning proof of the transitory character of the Old Testament dispensation, and that he should still have ventured to ask with reference to the appointed sacrifices (as if the answer would confirm his argument), "Else would they not have ceased to be offered?" (10²). Whether there is a reference in 10³² ff. to the Neronian persecution has been much disputed. If there be, the Epistle could not have been written much before A.D. 70. It is more likely, however, that the reference is to the sufferings of Christians in connexion with the expulsion of the Jews from Rome by Claudius, and in that case the date of writing may be A.D. 64, or

even earlier. The year 66 is favoured by Hilgenfeld, Lünemann, Schürer, Weiss, Godet, and Westcott. Others have in view the persecution under Domitian, and prefer a date between 81 and 96.

On the whole, it must be confessed that this is one of the Books of the New Testament regarding whose authorship and destination Criticism has yielded comparatively little fruit. We have still to say with Origen, "Who it was that wrote the Epistle God only knows certainly." But happily its value is to a great extent independent of such questions, for it speaks for itself from an exegetical point of view, and no question of forgery is involved, as no name is put forward. We may add that this is one of the few compositions in the New Testament whose beauty of style gave promise of the literary culture that was one day to be associated with Christianity.

THE GENERAL OR CATHOLIC EPISTLES¹

These Epistles are seven in number, viz., James ; I and II Peter ; I, II, and III John ; and

¹ In connexion with these writings the distinction between "letter" and "epistle" has been strongly emphasized

Jude. They have been known as the Catholic Epistles from the end of the second century

by a number of recent writers. The Catholic Epistles “are compositions addressed to Christians—one might perhaps say the Church—in general. The catholicity of the address implies, of course, a catholicity in the contents. What the Church calls *catholic* we require only to call *epistle*, and the unsolved enigma with which, according to Overbeck, they present us, is brought nearer to a solution. The special position of these ‘letters,’ which is indicated by their having the attribute *catholic* instinctively applied to them, is due precisely to their literary character; *catholic* means in this connexion *literary*. The impossibility of recognizing the ‘letters’ of Peter, James, and Jude, as real letters follows directly from the peculiarity in the form of their address. . . . The only way by which the letters could reach such ideal addresses was to have them reproduced in numbers from the first. But that means that they were literature. . . . It is true, indeed, that these Catholic Epistles are *Christian* literature: their authors had no desire to enrich universal literature; they wrote their books for a definite circle of people with the same views as themselves, that is, for Christians; but books they wrote. . . . It also follows from their character as epistles that the question of authenticity is not nearly so important for them as for the Pauline letters. It is allowable that in the epistle the personality of the writer should be less prominent; whether it is completely veiled, as, for instance, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, or whether it modestly hides itself behind some great name of the past, as in other cases, does not matter; considered in the light

onwards, to distinguish them from the Epistles of Paul (including Hebrews), which were addressed to individual Churches and were attributed to one Apostle only. They sometimes fill a whole Greek manuscript; in the case of manuscripts comprising the whole New Testament, they either follow the order given in our English Bible, or stand between Acts and the Pauline Epistles.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES

The first of these Epistles bears the superscription: "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion, greeting." Opinion regarding its authorship is almost as divided now as it was in the fourth century, when it was placed by Eusebius among the *Antilegomena* or "Disputed" Books of the New Testament. The majority of continental critics regard it as a work of the second or latter part of the first century, rejecting the traditional authorship of the book, partly on account of the want of early testimony in its favour, partly because of ancient literary practices, this is not only not strange, but in reality quite natural."—Deissmann's "Bible Studies," pp. 51, 52, 54.

they think they have detected in it features of a post-apostolic character, and partly also because it seems to them improbable that a Palestinian Jew of no great education should have had such a good command of the Greek language as is shown in this Epistle. Baur saw in it what he called "a toned-down Jewish Christianity," and assigned it to about A.D. 110. Harnack puts it still later, regarding it as a compilation (*c.* 170) of heterogeneous passages taken from Christian homilies, which were written between A.D. 120 and 140, based partly on sayings of Jesus, partly on those of Jewish and Gentile moralists. He finds in it the same kind of degenerate Christianity that appears in Clement, Hermas, Justin, and other writers of the second century. Jülicher holds part of it to be of Jewish origin, and characterizes it as "perhaps the least Christian book of the New Testament." He regards it as a work of the second quarter of the second century, issued in the name of James, the Lord's brother, in order to secure a wide circulation for it in the Church.

According to Brückner, the Epistle was forged by an Essene at Rome in the latter half

of the second century. Pfleiderer, on the other hand, regards it as a product of the "practical catholicism" which gained the ascendancy in the Church before the middle of the second century. Spitta (like Massebieau) has propounded a theory according to which the Epistle is a Christian adaptation of a Jewish work of the first century, the only change needed to restore it to its original form being the deletion of a few words referring to Jesus Christ at the beginning of the first and second chapters. Von Soden, while regarding many passages as of Jewish origin (especially 3¹⁻¹⁸; 4¹¹ - 5²⁰), considers the Epistle as a whole to have been addressed to Christians "of the third or fourth generation" by a Jewish Christian named James, who represents the eclectic and ethical tendencies of the Dispersion. Hilgenfeld believes it to have been written by an Eastern Jewish Christian in the reign of Domitian (81-96), while Weizsäcker puts it somewhat earlier (soon after 70), when the Palestinian Church had begun to be Ebionitic in its tendencies, and was preaching a Gospel of poverty.

On the other hand, the great majority of critics in this country have maintained the

genuineness of the Epistle¹ as the work of James, who was for many years at the head of the Church in Jerusalem (Mark 6³; Acts 12¹⁷; 21¹⁸; Gal. 2⁹). For this view a number of foreign critics of eminence² can also be quoted; but of recent years the tendency has been in an opposite direction, not only on the continent but also in America, and even, to some extent, in our own country.³

Recently the Jacobean authorship has been presented by two English scholars in a new light. G. Currie Martin has suggested that the Epistle is composed of short homilies by James on certain sayings of Jesus which he had preserved, and that they were only issued in a collective form after his death. J. H. Moulton is also of opinion that the Epistle embodies sayings of Jesus not preserved elsewhere, but thinks it was addressed by James not to Christians but to Jews, and that this is

¹ This may be attributed, partly at least, to the tendency of British scholars to give a book credit for genuineness till it is proved to be spurious.

² Including Neander, Mangold, Bleek, Kern, Ritschl, Beyschlag, Weiss, P. Ewald, Lechler, Zahn.

³ For example, the traditional authorship is denied by McGiffert, Bacon, Moffatt, and Peake.

the reason why it contains so little that is distinctively Christian, except in two or three passages which may have suffered from interpolation.

All are agreed that the external evidence is comparatively weak. Apart from coincidences with several other books of the New Testament (which may be accounted for in various ways), expressions derived from this Epistle are to be found in *Hermas*, and perhaps also in *Clement*, the "*Didaché*," *Irenæus*, and *Tertullian*. It was also included in the Syriac and Old Latin versions. But it has no place in the *Muratorian Fragment*, and no trace of it is to be found in *Hegesippus*, to whom we are indebted for an account of the martyrdom of *James*, or in the spurious "*Clementine Homilies*," which are addressed to *James* as the highest dignitary in the Church.¹ *Origen* is the first to quote from the

¹ *Hegesippus* tells us that immediately before the siege of *Jerusalem* was commenced (A.D. 66), *James* was put to death by the unbelieving Jews, who cast him down from a pinnacle of the Temple, and that his monument still stood by the side of the Temple (c. A.D. 160) with the inscription : "He hath been a true witness both to Jews and Greeks that *Jesus* is the *Christ*." There has been much controversy

Epistle by name, and he does so in such a way as to suggest that he felt some uncertainty as to the authorship. But before the close of the fourth century the claims of the Epistle to a place in the Canon (like those of the four disputed Catholic Epistles—II Peter, II and III John, and Jude) were fully recognized by the Church, at the Council held at Carthage in 397 A.D.

regarding the precise relationship in which James stood to Jesus. There are three views on the subject, associated with the names of Helvidius, Epiphanius, and Jerome respectively. According to the first theory (the Helvidian), James, like Joses, Judas, and Simon (Mark 6³), were the sons of Joseph and Mary, born after Jesus, and therefore his half-brothers; according to the second (the Epiphanian), they were the sons of Joseph by a former marriage, and therefore only the brothers of Jesus in a nominal sense; according to the third (Hieronymian) they were cousins of Jesus, being sons of Clopas or Alphæus, the husband of Mary's sister (Matt. 27⁵⁶; Mark 15⁴⁰, 16¹; John 19^{25, 27}). The first view is that which naturally occurs to an unprejudiced reader of the passages in the New Testament bearing on the subject, and probably it would never have been disputed but for its being at variance with the perpetual virginity of the mother of our Lord—a doctrine which grew up in the second century under the fostering influence of sentiment, and soon came to be generally accepted in the Church.

Turning to internal evidence, we find it to be of a very complex nature, lending support in some respects to various theories, but not harmonizing perfectly with any one of them. The traditional view is not without difficulties,—it is open to some objections ; but on the whole, the evidence, external and internal, seems to justify the belief that the early Church was right in admitting this Epistle into the Canon, and that it is not improbably the oldest book in the New Testament.

The way in which the writer designates himself in the opening verse, “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,” is very significant. One cannot fail to be struck with the mingled simplicity and dignity of the expression. It would have been quite unsuitable as a designation for any ordinary writer who wished to make himself known to his readers. On the other hand, a pretender wishing to pass for James, the Lord’s brother, would have been sure to claim the dignity of the position more plainly, whereas, if James himself was the writer, he would feel that there was no need for this, as there was no danger of his being mistaken by the reader for any other person.

In keeping with this is the habitual tone of authority which runs through the Epistle, there being fifty-four imperatives in one hundred and eight verses. The writer addresses his message "to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion, greeting." This is his Jewish way of describing the brethren at a distance from Jerusalem, many of whom had been scattered abroad by the persecution which broke out in the Holy Land. The Epistle may have been written when as yet there were comparatively few converts from heathenism, and no congregations exclusively composed of Gentiles, Paul's missionary journeys having not yet taken place. Antioch had not become a centre of Gentile Christianity, and Jerusalem was still the metropolis of the Christian, as well as of the Jewish, world. In keeping with this destination of the Epistle is the mention of "your synagogue" as the place of worship, and of "Abraham our father" (2^{2, 21}); also the designation of God by the Old Testament name of "the Lord of Sabaoth" (5⁴); and the prominence given to the law and the unity of the Godhead (2^{10, 19}). Yet the Christian character of the Epistle is unmistakable (1^{1, 18}; 2^{1, 5, 7, 8}; 3¹⁷ etc.).

The early date of the Epistle may be inferred from the meagreness of its Christian doctrine, as well as from the simplicity of the ecclesiastical arrangements to which it refers—teachers and elders being mentioned (3¹, 5¹⁴), but no bishops or deacons. Jesus Christ is acknowledged as “the Lord of glory” (2¹), and there is a reference to His second coming (5⁷⁻⁹), but there is no mention of His death, resurrection, or ascension. The new birth is alluded to (1¹⁸), but not the work of the Holy Spirit; there is a commendation of “the royal law” of love, as between man and man (2⁸), but there is no recognition of the redeeming love of God in Christ Jesus.

The Epistle is replete with our Saviour’s teaching, not in such a form as to give the impression that it is derived from the written Gospels, but moulded and transformed, as we might expect it to be, if the author was drawing upon his recollections of what he had heard during the Saviour’s lifetime, before he had learned to believe in Him as the Messiah.

There is no allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem, and, what is still more significant, no reference to the question of the obligatori-

ness of the Jewish law on Gentile converts, which excited so much controversy for a time, till it was practically settled at the Council of Jerusalem, about *c.* 48 A.D. This is a strong argument for dating the Epistle before the rise of that controversy, and accordingly Prof. Mayor and other advocates of the Jacobean authorship suggest 45 A.D. as the most probable date.

Tokens of the Palestinian origin of the Epistle have been discovered in the allusions to natural phenomena (1^{6, 11}; 3^{4, 11, 12}; 5⁷), and to the troubled state of society, when the Jewish converts had to face the hatred and oppression of the wealthy Sadducees and the proud Pharisees.

With regard to the language in which the Epistle is written, it has to be remembered that James, like the other members of the apostolic circle, was probably familiar with the Greek tongue from his youth, and that many of the members of the Church in Jerusalem, over which he had presided for a considerable time, were Hellenists or Greek-speaking Jews, who used the Septuagint version of the Old Testament—like those congregations in Palestine and Syria and elsewhere, for whom

the Epistle was intended. Though the author is more expert in the use of Greek than most of the New Testament writers, his style of composition bears a distinctly Hebraic character, being abrupt and sententious, reminding one of the Book of Proverbs. Moreover, the diction employed bears a strong resemblance to the speech delivered by James at the Council of Jerusalem, when he proposed that a letter should be sent to the Gentile converts regarding their relations to the laws of Moses.¹ There is some apparent opposition between the teaching of this Epistle and Paul's letters to the Romans and Galatians, with regard to the comparative importance of faith and works. This is owing to the fact that the two writers look at the question from different points of view, and there is no real inconsistency between them. At the same time, it is not unlikely that the warning which Paul addresses in the fourth chapter of Romans to those who pride themselves on their observance of the Law, was intended to guard against

¹ Yet Prof. Bacon ventures to say that "the notion of James writing encyclicals before Paul has even begun to write his epistles, is almost grotesque."

abuse of the teaching in the Epistle of James (2¹⁴⁻²⁶) with regard to the necessity of good works. Others, however, who assign a late date to the Epistle, allege that its teaching was aimed against the extreme Paulinists who perverted the Apostle's doctrine of grace, and did not realize the need for showing their faith by their works. There is a similar conflict of opinion as to how we are to account for the connexion between this Epistle and I Peter and Hebrews; according as we assign the priority to the former or to the two latter, we determine to a large extent the date and authorship of the Epistle.¹

On these and other points there is room for difference of opinion, but, on the whole, there seems to be no sufficient reason to prefer any of the various conflicting theories, which deny the genuineness of the Epistle, to the traditional view which regards it as marking an early stage in the slow transition from Judaism to Christianity, of which James "the Just," the acknowledged leader of the primitive

¹ Prof. Bacon puts it rather strongly when he says that "the indications of date by literary relationship are really conclusive" against the traditional authorship.

Church in Jerusalem, was the most notable example.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER

This epistle was hardly ever called in question until a comparatively recent time. It was included by Eusebius among the *Homologoumena*, or books universally received, and there is no trace of any objection having been taken to it previous to that time. Strong evidence in its favour is afforded by the Christian writers of the second century, from Polycarp onwards, and echoes of its language are to be found in still earlier documents.¹ Even among modern critics the general opinion is that it was composed by the Apostle Peter,² though on the other side there are some well-known names, such as Hausrath, Holtzmann, Hilgenfeld, Pfeiderer, Jülicher, Harnack, von

¹ Hermas, Didaché, Clement. Eusebius says it was used by Papias (c. A.D. 135). The author of II Peter (3¹) speaks of his work as "the second epistle" written by him to the same readers.

² So Schleiermacher, Neander, Meyer, de Wette, Bleek, Weiss, Salmon, Dods, Plumptre, Ramsay, Bartlet, Bigg, Chase, Bennett,

Soden, Schmiedel, and S. Davidson.¹ Those who deny the Petrine authorship differ a good deal in their opinions as to the genesis of the Epistle, some holding that it was occasioned by the persecution under Domitian towards the close of the first century (92-96), and others connecting it with the rescript of Trajan to Pliny, in A.D. 112. Harnack considers it too Pauline (as Jülicher also does) to be the work of Peter, and regards 1^{1 f.} and 5^{12 ff.} as additions made *c.* 150-170 (perhaps by the author of II Pet.) to an anonymous composition, of 63-93 A.D. McGiffert suggests Barnabas as the writer (*c.* 90); von Soden, Silvanus (*c.* 93-96)—to whom Zahn also attributes the authorship (*c.* 50) under the direction of Peter (I Pet. 5¹²). Some of the objections taken to the genuineness of the book are similar to those brought against the Epistle of James, such as the excellence of its Greek—but with this Silvanus may have had something to do—and the use of the Septuagint in the quotations from the Old Testament. The main arguments against it, however, are

¹ Moffatt wavers in his opinion, and calls the writing "semi-pseudonymous."

its want of distinctively Petrine teaching, and the advanced character of the persecutions to which Christians appear to have been liable when the Epistle was written.

According to the opening verse it was addressed "to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." A few critics, such as Weiss (following Origen and Eusebius), understand this to be a description of the Jewish Christians scattered throughout North-Western Asia; but the contents of the letter are in some respects quite at variance with this supposition (1^{14, 18}; 2^{9 f.}; 4^{2 f.}), and the great majority of writers take the words to be a figurative description of the Christian Churches in the districts referred to. This is in harmony with the mode of expression employed by the writer when he says: "Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (2¹¹; cf. Heb. 11¹³). On the same principle, "Babylon," from which the Epistle purports to be sent, is another name for Rome,¹

¹ "That this Epistle was written from Rome, I cannot doubt. It is impregnated with Roman thought to a degree

as in the Apocalypse and elsewhere—the use of such figurative language being a precaution against persecution, in case the document should fall into unfriendly hands. The probability seems to be that it was written from Rome shortly before Peter's death, which, according to a well-supported tradition, took place about A.D. 64, in connexion with the persecution under Nero. If such was the case, there is no reason to be astonished at the large infusion of Pauline thoughts and expressions (borrowed especially from Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians),¹ or at the resemblance which the letter bears in some respects to the Epistle of James.² By the time referred to, any feeling of antagonism between the two apostles, had probably died away under the mellowing influence of their advancing years, being overruled by the logic of events in

beyond any other book in the Bible; the relation to the state and its officers forms an unusually large part of the whole" (Ramsay).

¹ Sieffert has suggested that Ephesians and I Peter may have had the same author. But Weiss (with Kühl) gives the priority to I Peter, which he dates as early as A.D. 54.

² There are also verbal coincidences with the Johannine writings and Hebrews.

the history of the Church, which called for unity of action on the part of its leaders. We may see a token of the growing harmony which prevailed in the apostolic circle in the fact that Mark, whom Paul speaks of in Philemon (v. 24) as his fellow-worker, and in II Tim. (4¹¹) as "useful to me for ministering," is here singled out for affectionate recognition by Peter, who calls him "my son," and associates him with himself in sending greetings to the Churches (5¹³); to which we may add that the Silvanus whom Peter employed as an amanuensis or secretary (5¹²), was in all probability Paul's former coadjutor Silas, who had laboured with him in Syria, Cilicia, and Galatia (Acts, chaps. 15-18).

All this helps to explain the family likeness which can be traced in many of the writings in the New Testament, even when they bear the names of different authors. By the seventh decade of the first century the Church had begun to realize its unity, and the apostles were working hand in hand. It was not to be expected, therefore, that we should find in this Epistle the distinctive views of the "apostle of the circumcision," whom Paul withstood to the

face, when he separated himself from the Gentile converts for fear of offending the narrow-minded Jewish Christians who had come down to Antioch from Jerusalem (Gal. 2). About fifteen years had passed since then, and during that time we may be sure that Peter must have learned much, for he was singularly impressionable and open to new influences. Apart from his intercourse or correspondence with Paul, we cannot suppose that his intimacy with John had ceased after the conference in Jerusalem (Gal. 2⁹), or that he had failed to share in the intellectual and spiritual progress which characterized that apostle.

At the same time, there are some interesting points of contact between this Epistle and the language or experience of the apostle Peter, as otherwise known to us.¹ While it contains few reminiscences of Christ's ministry, it is significant that the writer speaks of himself as "a witness of the sufferings of Christ." He emphasizes Christ's meekness and patience as

¹ Cf. I Peter 1¹⁷, and Acts 10³⁴ f.; I Peter 5², and Acts 20²⁸; I Peter 1¹², and Acts 2⁴; I Peter 5⁸, and Luke 22³¹.

an example to His followers under persecution, and gives prominence to His resurrection as a pledge of the glory that should be revealed. The want of any personal reference to Paul has been unfavourably commented on, but very probably it may have been due to that apostle's having left Rome after his liberation from prison, perhaps to pay the visit to Spain which he had long had in view.

To some critics it seems very unlikely that Peter should have sent a circular letter to Churches with which he had no personal connexion. But the truth is that we know very little about Peter's career after he disappears from the pages of the Book of Acts. Tradition connects him with Syria, Asia Minor, Rome, and Corinth; and it is quite possible that in Asia Minor he rendered more extensive service than Paul ever did. The Churches which are known to have been founded by Paul in that part of the world are comparatively few, and other agencies may have been at work there for the propagation of the Gospel. It has been suggested that Paul's quarrel with Mark in Pamphylia, when the latter left Paul and Barnabas and returned to Jerusalem, may

have had something to do with the rights and interests of other missionaries in the field, and the statement in Acts about the Holy Ghost forbidding Paul and Silas to speak the word in Asia, and about the Spirit of Jesus not suffering them to go into Bithynia, admits of a similar interpretation (Acts 16^{6 f.}). In any case, we can hardly believe that the arrangement made many years before, by which Paul and Barnabas should go unto the Gentiles and the other apostles to the Jews (Gal. 2⁹), was very long or very strictly enforced, for we find Paul at a later time frequently addressing the Jews in their synagogues, and, as time advanced and the Church increased, it would become more and more impracticable to carry out such an agreement.

According to Schwegler, the object of the Epistle was "that an exposition of the Pauline doctrine might be put into the mouth of Peter." But there is no sign of any such dogmatic or partisan motive, the chief purpose of the writer being apparently a desire to encourage and comfort his readers under the dangers and trials to which they were exposed on account of their religion. If the writer

had been trying to personate Peter, and if conciliation had been his object, he would have been pretty sure to introduce a friendly allusion to Paul, who was well known to have passed a considerable time at Rome in his later years.

As regards the objection taken to the Epistle on account of the alleged signs of a later date in the references to persecution, Mommsen, the great historian of Rome, takes a different view of the matter; and while it may be the case, as Ramsay contends, that such expressions as "being reproached for the name of Christ" and "suffering as a Christian" (4^{14, 16}) would be more appropriate in the reign of Domitian, or even Trajan, than of Nero, there are other expressions which correspond better to an earlier time, when the treatment of Christians depended a good deal on their own character and conduct, and the mere profession of Christianity was not of itself a punishable offence (2¹³⁻¹⁵, 3¹³⁻¹⁷, 4¹⁴⁻¹⁷). No doubt, after the example of cruelty set by Nero in the murder of thousands of Christians on the charge of setting fire to Rome, the name of Christian would in fact, though not in law, carry with it a certain amount of odium, and

expose the bearer of it to injurious treatment at the hands of unbelievers. This would be the case not only at Rome but also in the provinces, where the authorities were only too ready to follow the imperial lead in such a case. Neither in this nor in any other question raised by adverse criticism does there seem to be any valid reason for giving up our belief in the Petrine authorship, which comes to us with the authority of the early Church, and seems to meet the facts of the case much better than any other theory of its origin which has yet been suggested. Sir William Ramsay is so impressed with its genuineness that though he cannot assign it to an earlier period than 80 A.D., and the traditional date of Peter's death is about 64 A.D., he still believes it to be the work of Peter at a later time, when he was more than eighty years of age. Weiss, on the other hand, who is equally convinced of its genuineness, dates it as early as 54 A.D.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER ;
THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE

These two epistles have been more questioned than any other books in the New Testa-

ment. II Peter, especially, is not only very weak in external evidence but is also open to serious objections on other grounds. Origen is the first writer who mentions it by name, and in doing so he expresses doubt about its genuineness. It is found neither in the Muratorian Canon nor in the Peshitta, and the first clear quotation from it is by Firmilian (*c.* 250), though it shows many coincidences, in thought and expression, with the earliest patristic writers. It has much in common with the Epistle of Jude, and a comparison of the two leads almost inevitably to the conclusion that one is borrowed from the other. Opinion is divided as to which is the original, but the large majority of critics assign the priority to Jude, both because II Peter often contains the same things in an expanded form, and also because many of its expressions would be almost unintelligible but for the light thrown on them by the shorter Epistle.

With regard to the authorship of II Peter, the writer distinctly claims to be the apostle of that name, and describes the document as the "second epistle" addressed by him to the

same readers (3¹). He also alludes as an eye-witness to two well-known incidents in the life of Christ in which Peter took a leading part (1¹⁴, cf. John 21¹⁸ f. ; 1¹⁶⁻¹⁸, cf. Mark 9²⁻⁸). The claim thus made is supported by the fact that the Epistle bears subtle traces of Peter's words and deeds as recorded in the Gospel of Mark and the Acts of the Apostles, and exhibits some marked similarities to I Peter—to which we may add that it is far superior in earnestness and force to any of the sub-apostolic literature that has come down to us.

On the other hand, there is such a difference of style in the two compositions that many critics cannot believe them to be the work of the same writer. For example, while in I Peter our Lord is usually called "Jesus Christ," this name occurs only once in II Peter, where the favourite designations are "our Lord Jesus Christ," "our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," "our God and Saviour Jesus Christ," "Jesus our Lord." From a literary point of view the style of II Peter, though ambitious and showy, is much inferior to that of the other, and the difference is the more remarkable because the two epistles purport

to be addressed to the same readers. One of the strongest arguments against apostolic authorship is found in the reference to the epistles of Paul (3¹⁶), as if they were on the same level as "the other scriptures," a position which they did not fully attain till long after the death of both Peter and Paul. Then, again, the combination of "the holy prophets," "the Lord and Saviour," and "your apostles," in 3²; the paucity of allusions to the Old Testament; the want of any reference to the sayings, doings, or sufferings of Christ, except in the two cases above mentioned (which may conceivably have been introduced for the purpose of authenticating the Epistle); the language put into the mouths of mockers with reference to the long delay of the Second Coming: "Where is the promise of his coming? For, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation"; the appropriation, without any acknowledgment, of so large a portion of another Epistle; the absence of personal greetings; and, not least, the want of any clear evidence of the use of the Epistle by any Christian writer for 150 years after

Peter's death, have all been adduced as reasons for denying the Petrine authorship.

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that the view held by Eusebius, who placed the Epistle in his list of *Antilegomena* or disputed books, and at the same time indicated that in his opinion the tradition in its favour was insufficient to authenticate it, has been adopted by the majority of modern critics. Reuss speaks of its admission into the Canon as the only positive mistake made by the Church in its collection of sacred books, while Jülicher goes so far as to say that it "is not only the latest document in the New Testament but also the least deserving of a place in the canon," a statement, however, which is not borne out by the general sentiment of Christendom. Harnack dates it as late as 160-170. But while opinion in Germany is generally unfavourable to the genuineness of the Epistle, there are some scholars of eminence who are confident that it was written by the Apostle whose name it bears. In particular, Zähn and Spitta hold it to be more thoroughly Petrine than I Peter, which they believe to be largely the work of Silvanus

(I Pet. 5¹²), the previous epistle of Peter, to which he refers in II Peter 3¹, being supposed to have disappeared at an early date. Like Kühl and Weiss, they hold it to have been addressed to Jewish readers, and date it about A.D. 63-65.

Among British scholars opinion used to be in favour of the apostolic origin of the Epistle, but the most recent critics, with the exception of the writer on the subject in the I.C.C., are disposed to assign it to the second century, and to regard it as designed to counteract antinomian tendencies of a more or less Gnostic character. Some would connect it with the so-called Apocalypse of Peter (with which it has a good deal in common), and other writings put forth in the Apostle's name about the middle of the second century, while others would give it a much earlier date, and see in the evils which it so vehemently attacks such shameful practices as those of the Nicolaitans of Pergamum and Thyatira, referred to in Rev. 2^{13 f., 19-22}. The irreconcilable difference of style in the two Epistles ascribed to Peter, which has been the great stumbling-block from the days of Jerome until now, can find no

better explanation than the one which that great scholar suggested, namely, that the apostle employed different interpreters in the two cases, unless we prefer the view of Calvin that it was the work of one of Peter's followers, who was carrying out his master's wishes, and may have taken the opportunity of giving a wider circulation to the warnings in the Epistle of Jude, by embodying them in his Epistle. It is in this foreign element that the difference of style is most marked, and it has been suggested, as another solution, that this part of the Epistle was a later interpolation.

It must not be supposed that by giving up the Petrine authorship we lose the benefit of the Epistle. We may still say, with Calvin, that "the majesty of the Spirit of Christ exhibits itself in every part of it." It has also to be remembered that there may never have been a time in the history of the Church when there was not uncertainty regarding the origin of this book. In this respect modern readers are no worse off than those who never heard of the Higher Criticism.

It was an idea of Grotius that the words "Peter . . . and apostle" (1¹) were an

interpolation, and that "the second epistle" referred to (3¹) consisted of the first two chapters, the name "Simon" at the head of the Epistle representing Simeon, Bishop of Jerusalem. According to Bunsen, the first twelve verses and the concluding doxology were the only genuine parts of the Epistle.

The Epistle of Jude stands on a different footing. It has stronger testimony in its favour, having a place in the Muratorian Canon and being frequently mentioned by Christian writers before the end of the second century. We should doubtless have found it much oftener quoted than it is, had it not been for its brevity and its use of two apocryphal Jewish works, namely, the "Assumption of Moses" (Jude v. 9) and the "Book of Enoch" (Jude v. 14 f.), the latter of which is quoted by name.

With regard to the author, there are some who identify him with Jude the Apostle ("Judas the son of James," Luke 6¹⁶), but the reference which he makes to "the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ," in verses 17 and 18, as well as the fact that he does not himself claim to be an apostle, render this conjecture extremely improbable. Others think that it is

“Judas Barsabbas” of Acts 15²² that is referred to, but the general opinion is that it is Judas one of the Lord’s brethren (Matt. 13⁵⁵, I Cor. 9⁵), whether we understand by that description a younger son of Joseph and Mary or a son of Joseph by a former wife—in either case, a “brother of James,” the head of the Church at Jerusalem. The comparatively obscure position of this Jude in the history of the early Church (as of the others who bore the same name), and the unpretending way in which he is described as “a servant of Jesus Christ,” though he might have claimed to be the Lord’s brother, forbid the supposition that there was here any attempt to use a great name for the purpose of imposing on the reader. That one so closely related to Jesus should have held a position of influence, if not of authority, in the Church at Jerusalem or elsewhere in Palestine, is only what might have been expected; and we can readily believe that this letter, although formally addressed “to them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ,” was specially intended for some of the Churches known to Jude, in which there had been an

outbreak of antinomian license, such as is foreshadowed in the Pastoral Epistles and has frequently occurred in the history of the Church. From verse 3 it may be inferred that the subject had been chosen by the writer at the last moment, on hearing news of some such perversion of the Gospel.

The author was evidently acquainted with Paul's writings, and from this fact as well as from the way in which he speaks of the personal teaching of the apostles as a thing of the past in the experience of his readers, and of faith in the second coming of Christ as on the decline, many critics who accept the traditional authorship assign a comparatively late date to the Epistle (about 70-80),¹ while others date it before A.D. 70, partly on account of its containing no allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem—an event to which the writer might have been expected to refer, as an awful instance of Divine judgment, if it had already taken place.²

¹ Ewald, Spitta, Zahn, Mayor, Sieffert, Bartlet, Reuss, Lumby, Bennett, etc.

² Bleek, Kirchhofer, Weiss, Stier, Salmond, Bigg, Chase. But Hofmann and Zahn fancy there is a reference to this event in verse 5.

There are a considerable number of scholars, however, who are of opinion that the character of the Epistle, and the degenerate state of the Church which it implies,¹ betray an acquaintance on the part of the author with the libertine Gnosticism of the second century. It shows what a wide divergence of opinion there is on the subject, that, while Baur thought the Epistle could not have been written till late in the second century, Renan put it as early as A.D. 54, regarding it as a covert attack on Paul's teaching. Baur's followers generally favour an earlier date in the second century than he assigned to it. This is the case also with Harnack (who dates it about 100-130, and suggests that the words "and brother of James" may have been an interpolation of a later date intended to give the Epistle additional authority), McGiffert, S. Davidson, and others, who hold the Epistle

¹ For evidence that similar evils existed in apostolic times cf. Revelation 2¹⁴ f., 20th; Galatians 5¹³; II Corinthians 12²¹. It has been suggested that in Jude v. 10 there is a reference to the Cainites, a Gnostic sect of the second century, but if so, this would not be the only passage of the New Testament in which Cain is mentioned as a type of ungodliness (cf. Heb. 11⁴, I John 3¹²).

to be pseudonymous, the name of Jude having been selected as a likely exponent for the views expressed in it.

It appears from verse 18 that the readers had enjoyed the personal teaching of the apostles; and from this fact, as well as from the Jewish associations and traditions which enter into the Epistle, we may infer that it was intended for some part of Palestine or Syria where "ungodly men" professing Christianity were turning the grace of God into lasciviousness (verse 10). Jude attributes the evil practices to false and heretical teaching, and as a remedy he exhorts his readers to contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints, and concludes with one of the most beautiful doxologies in the New Testament.

In closing our survey of the History and Results of New Testament Criticism, there are three things which it would be well to bear in mind. (1) With regard to many of the questions involved it is quite impossible to arrive at anything like certainty. (2) Great learning is no guarantee of sound judgment; and the evidence

of experts, in this as in other fields of inquiry, must be carefully considered before their conclusions are accepted. (3) Infinitely more important than any opinion we may form regarding the authorship, date, or text, of any book in the New Testament, is the question : " What think ye of the Christ ? " as revealed under various aspects both in the Old and the New Testament. It is their testimony to Christ that gives the Scriptures their chief value ; it is the revelation of Christ that forms their inner bond of union.

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